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MARCH | APRIL 2015

Raising a Trans Child

By Frank Pizzoli

"Falling outside of the gender binary isn't a mental illness that needs treatment," explains Elizabeth Leen. She spoke Feb. 4 to parents about raising a transgender child at the LGBT Community Center, Harrisburg.

Called TRANS-ition, the group is a setting for parents and caregivers of gender non-conforming youth that continues March 4 and April 1.

Leen is a Licensed Social Worker who is currently the Behavioral Health Administrator and Therapist at Alder Health Services. Since 2011 she has been working to develop and grow Alder's behavioral health program while providing therapy services for members of the LGBT community.

Raising a trans child, or a child who does not identify with gender-normative expectations - like clothing or play activities which, for

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Supporting your child to be themselves has been proven to have significant positive outcome.

Local Author's Book Makes Top 10 Gay Non-fiction List

By Frank Pizzoli

Called a "must read," Michael Long's book on gay pioneer Frank Kameny has been chosen as one of the Top 10 gay, non-fiction books for 2014. *Gay Is Good: The Life and Letters of Gay Rights Pioneer Franklin Kameny* by the Elizabethtown College professor is a "must-read for anyone interested in the history of the gay rights movement" says *Publishers Weekly.*

Michael Long

Harvard University's Michael Bronski, a staple in the world of gay history, said: "The LGBT movement has been blessed with an amazing array of passionate, provocative, colorful, dedicated, and sometimes infuriating women and men. Frank Kameny is certainly one of the most important. Michael Long's magnificent book captures the breadth of the movement and the specificity of Kameny's life and importance."

Long tells Central Voice about his editing of Kameny's historically rich letters, 150 letters from 1958 to 1975, that reveal some of the early stirrings of today's politically powerful LGBT movement. The letters are lively and colorful because they are in Kameny's inimitable voice, a voice that was consistently loud, echoing through such places as the Oval Office, the Pentagon, and the British Parliament, and often shrill, piercing to the federal agency heads, military generals, and media personalities who received his countless letters. Long is the author and editor of several

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Black Lives Matter...

Some of Them Are Gay

By Frank Pizzoli

No community is immune from Ferguson-like headlines. If complaints about police interactions aren't in the local news, communities nationwide fear they may be next.

Instead of waiting for a heart-breaking headline, some communities have seen organizers come forward to create change in the hope of avoiding tragic use of force and what they perceive as discriminatory policing practices. The organizers are "organic" in the parlance of advocacy. They are not affiliated with an organization. They are creating dialogue, not bylaws and boards of directors.

In Harrisburg, Lauren Hansard spearheaded a local link to the national, organic movement "Black Lives Matter" which held a December 13 "Die-in" on the steps of the Capitol. "The common misconception about Harrisburg and the region is that residents don't care about what happens here let alone across the country. The success of the event proved that notion wrong," she said.

Soon after Hansard's "Die-in", Sarah Schubert, Frank Henley, Angela Kirkland, Chris Siennick, and Samantha Moore helped pull together ThisStopsToday-

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ANALYSIS

Protestors at Dec. 13, 2014 "Die-in" at state Capital. *Central Voice photo*

Murderer Gets His Groove pg 8

Student Equality Action pg 12

Can't Have Cake And Eat It Too pg 24

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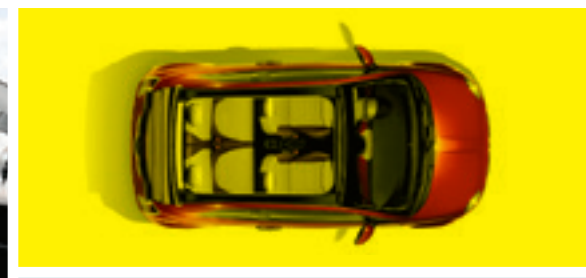

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Political Update

• Kerry Establishes LGBT Envoy

The State Department has recommended that President Barack Obama name Randy Berry, currently the consul general to the Netherlands, as the United State's first special envoy for LGBT rights, a source familiar with the deliberation reports BuzzFeed News. Berry has overseen the United States' consulates in the Netherlands since 2012, according to his bio on the State Department website. His most recent postings before that were in New Zealand and Nepal, but he has also served in countries with governments that have recently launched anti-LGBT crackdowns including Uganda and Egypt. The new job will be an extension of State Department's recent initiatives to enhance and discuss LGBT rights both at home and abroad. The U.S. in August 2013 began issuing immigrant visas to same-sex couples in August, released the first Department statement to commemorate Transgender Day of Remembrance that November, and condemned Uganda's anti-homosexuality bill in February 2014.

• U.S. Kicks African Nation from Agreement

The US had dropped Gambia from a popular free trade agreement in response to a crackdown on LGBT rights and other human rights concerns. The decision to drop the small West African nation from special trade status under the African Growth and Opportunity Act of 2000 came after Gambian media announced that three men would be put on trial for homosexuality. These are the first to face trial since police began arresting people on allegations of homosexuality last November. At least sixteen more are known to be in detention, and Gambian human rights activists do not know if they are even still alive.

• India Elects Transgender Mayor

India has elected its first transgender mayor, Madhu Kinnar, from Raigarh, about 300 miles west of the India-Bangladesh border whose population is mostly of Hindu faith. An Independent candidate, Kinnar won the election by 4,537 votes against BJP's Mahaveer Guruji. Bharatiya Janata Party, or Indian People's Party is one of the two major parties in the Indian political system, along with the Indian National Congress. As of 2014, it is the country's largest political party in terms of representation in the national parliament and state assemblies. The BJP is a right-wing party. Madhu Kinnar, 35, said," "People have shown faith in me. I consider this win as love and blessings of people for me. I'll put in my best efforts to accomplish their dreams."

• Kyrgyzstan Lawmaker Calls for Execution

A leading Kyrgyz politician has called for the public execution of LGBTI people "in order to cleanse society." MP Narynbek Maldobaev made the comments in a 26-minute film about the central Asian country by Vocativ. One resident of the capital Bishek said local people did not want "Western ideas about gays and lesbians" and the lawmaker went as far as to say they should all be exterminated. 'If it were up to me, I would round them up, the despicable criminals. I'd bring them to a public square and there I would publicly punish them," he said. Asked if by "punish" he meant execute, Madobaev said, "Yes. That's about right. In order to cleanse society." Although gay sex is legal in Kygryzstan, lawmakers last October overwhelmingly voted in favor of a Russian-style law that will punish "gay propaganda" with up to a year in jail.

• Activists Defy Ugandan Laws

Risking detention by police and death threats, gay rights activists in Uganda are publishing a new magazine, Bombastic, that shares stories about the country's LGBTI community. Magazine organizer's in Kampala want to "share the realities of being gay" in Uganda, where homosexuality activity is illegal, the mainstream media is openly hostile towards gay people and the government has repeatedly tried to introduce new laws to ban the "promotion of homosexuality". Homophobia is rife in the socially conservative country, but a team of 130 volunteers behind Bombastic were set to hand out 30,000 copies of the 75-page edition by the start of the 2015 with a total of four issues planned. "Bombastic came about because we wanted to put right many of the falsehoods spread by the Ugandan media, which regularly publicly humiliates and degrades homosexuals," said Jacqueline Kasha, a lesbian activist and the magazine's main organizer. "Instead, we are sharing our stories in the hope that we can change social attitudes. The people we are trying to reach out to are the people who are threatening to burn our houses and beat us."
Link: www.kuchutimes.com/bombastic-magazine-online-edition/

• Egyptian Court Acquits 26 Men

BuzzFeed's Lester Feder and Maged Atef report that a Cairo court has acquitted 26 men of charges of participating in a gay "sex party" at a public bathhouse in December. The moment the judge pronounced the verdict, the court room exploded with the joyous cries of family. They rallied outside the court room pumping their fists in the air chanting, "where is the press? Here are the real men!" calling for reporters to cover the exoneration of the men as aggressively as they sensationalized their arrest. The case became known throughout Egypt because a television broadcaster named Mona Iraqi was filming when police dragged them naked from the bathhouse last December 7. Iraqi claimed to have tipped police off to sexual activities inside the bathhouse, and she featured it in a program purporting to tell, "the whole story of the dens for spreading AIDS in Egypt," on the three nights following the raid. This is the first time a trial court has ever acquitted men accused of homosexuality in a high-profile case, according to human rights activists in Cairo. Tarek el-Awady, one of the defense lawyers, said this was a huge boost for the rule of law in Egypt. Egyptian courts routinely make convictions based on police testimony even when evidence is flimsy, and this was proof that at least some courts are unwilling to rubber stamp their actions.

• Slovokia: Pope Endorses Referendum Denying Marriage & Adoption Rights

BuzzFeed's J. Lester Federer reports that Pope Francis gave his blessing Feb. 3 to a referendum that would ban marriage and adoption rights for same-sex couples in Slovakia. "I greet the pilgrims from Slovakia and, through them, I wish to express my appreciation to the entire Slovak church, encouraging everyone to continue their efforts in defense of the family, the vital cell of society," Francis said during a general audience in Rome. Slovakia is the latest battleground over LGBT family rights in Europe, which is increasingly divided between east and west. Slovakia's parliament actually added language denying marriage recognition to same-sex couples to the country's constitution in June, making it one of four countries in Eastern Europe to do so since 2012. "For first time in Slovak modern history the Catholic Church is heavily involved in political campaign," said Martin Macko, executive director of the LGBT rights group Inokost.

• Macedonia Bans Same-sex Marriage

In a 72-4 Jan. 20 vote, the Parliament of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) constitutionally defined marriage as a union between a man and a woman. Furthermore, it created a constitutional hurdle to possible future legislation on same-sex civil unions. The amendment defines that "marriage shall be a life union solely of one woman and one man." Furthermore, point two reads that "legal relations in marriage, family, and civil unions are to be regulated by a law adopted by a two-thirds majority of the total number of Members of Parliament." An earlier version of the draft Amendment, which explicitly banned same-sex civil unions or registered cohabitation was strongly criticized by the Venice Commission, an advisory body of the Council of Europe in constitutional affairs.

• Obama Fixes Social Security for Gay Couples

President Obama included language in his proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year that would remove a legal barrier prohibiting same-sex couples in non-marriage equality states from receiving certain Social Security spousal benefits, according to *The Washington Blade*. The plan also seeks to amend the Social Security Act, which currently looks to the state of residence, not the state of celebration, to determine whether a couple is married. That means unless same-sex couples live in one of the 36 states where gay couples can legally marry, they're currently ineligible for certain Social Security spousal benefits, including survivor benefits and the one-time lump sum death benefit. If Obama's budget proposal is approved U.S. code would be changed so married same-sex couples would be eligible for these benefits even if they live in a state that doesn't recognize their marriage.

• D.C. MAYOR Outlaws Conversion Therapy

Towerload's Kyler Geoffroy reports that Washington D.C. Mayor Vincent Gray has signed into law a bill protecting LGBT youth from the dangerous and discredited practice of conversion therapy. D.C. is now the third jurisdiction to ban the harmful practice following California and New Jersey. The National Center for Lesbian Rights said: "This law ensures that mental health practitioners can no longer abuse their power to harm young people and families by propagating the dangerous lie that there is something wrong with being LGBT or that therapy can change their core sexual orientation or gender identity." The center lead efforts to protect youth and their families from these practices by help[ing to pass legislation in California and New Jersey. The center has also launched its #BornPerfect campaign to end conversion therapy across the country over the next five years by passing laws, fighting in courtrooms, and raising awareness about the serious harms caused by attempts to change a young person's sexual orientation or gender identity.

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Confirmed: Readers Hear Voices

Frank Pizzoli

A while back we asked if our readers heard voices. They do. They hear the voices of our columnists who are mostly residents of the region.

Leo Dunn, who pens our legal column, can be relied upon to make the mysterious and the technical understandable.

Debra Battisti always knows what the latest LGBT good book is from her perch at the Dauphin County Library system.

Louie Marven keeps readers informed about events and issues surrounding the region's LGBT Community Center, located in Harrisburg but busy at other locations throughout the region.

Bill Krenz let's us know what the business community is up to on behalf of the local gay chamber.

Trum Simmons frames issues from his long-time role as educator and advocate for the community in the academy.

Pastor Lori Rivera brings readers a religious and spiritual perspective on the many benchmarks of life.

Terry Drew Karanen brings us a spiritual but more secular approach to life's age old situations.

Each columnist brings a needed voice to these pages.

It's been confirmed: Readers hear Voices.

In our last issue (Jan-Feb 2015), Joanne Carroll, new president of Trans - CentralPA, asked in her column that Gov. Tom Wolfe to keep his campaign promise of including LGBT identified individuals in all the state's anti-discrimination and hate crimes legislation.

A provocative piece, *Are Gay Rights Being Pitted against Black Civil Rights?*, by Shaashawn Dial-Snowden, asked tough questions of both the gay and African-American communities - communities that not mutually exclusive. If Black Lives Matter, and they do, then some of those lives are Black *and* gay as our cover story highlights.

Jason Landau Goodman, president of the Pennsylvania Student Equality Coalition, analyzed the potential fallout from former state Rep. Mike Fleck's loss in the last election. Fleck served eight terms in the House but had come out before the last election cycle. Some political observers concluded that his open sexuality and not his conservative values which remained unchanged while in office, drew primary opponents.

Goodman's colleague, Turner Stulting, is a convener of PSEC's Coordinating Committee, and along with Goodman explains the organization's inner workings.

Each voice is new to our pages. Each is an important voice in the public square.

In this issue, *Central Voice* samples other precincts of experience.

Club Kid Michael Alig, now 48 and recently released from prison after 17 years for murder, talks to our NYC Correspondent Winnie McCroy about life after jail.

Michael Long's latest book, *Gay Is Good: The Life and Letters of Gay Rights Pioneer Franklin Kameny*, has been selected as one of the Top 10 non-fiction gay books for 2014. The local author and Elizabethtown College academician tells readers what that's been like.

Alder Health Services Liz Leen discusses what it's like for parents to raise a transgender child.

Enough voices for a chorus!

community voice

Equality PA Talks Nondiscrimination

The need for LGBT nondiscrimination legislation in Pennsylvania is discussed Jan. 28 by Equality PA executive director Ted Martin, right, with Gov. Tom Wolf, left, at a network breakfast in Harrisburg. Equality PA joined LGBT groups from around the country in a week-long effort known as #Discrimination Exists known in Pennsylvania as CampaignforFairness.org. Currently, state law does not include protections based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

10 Proposals for the City of Harrisburg

ThisStopsTodayHbg is a local activist group organized as a result of non-indictment rulings for police officers in the death of Eric Garner. Since forming, TSTH has presented Harrisburg City Council with a list of police reform proposals.

1. The formation of a civilian complaint review board that independently investigates all uses of deadly and excessive force by police, in addition to charges of brutality, corruption, harassment and malfeasance.

2. A review and reform of Harrisburg Police Department's (HPD) policy on the use of deadly force.

3. To avoid regulatory capture and to strengthen the public's trust in the judicial process, the appointment of special state prosecutors for any prosecutions of HPD officers.

4. The implementation of a body camera program, dashboard cameras, and GPS location devices for all police vehicles as well as video recordings of all interviews of suspects and holding facilities.

5. City Council legislative action prohibiting HPD's acquisition of military vehicles, weapons, and hardware.

6. Police trainings focused on: emotional self-regulation in the heat of action, criminal justice ethics, PTSD, mental

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voice box

BEST USE

I'd like to express my appreciation and admiration for the Nov/Dec 2014 issue of Central Voice as it focused front page and inside articles on the much neglected subject of bisexuality. Additional articles scattered throughout the issue added sidelights and insights into bisexuality as experienced by transgender, transvestite, married persons and questioning youth, making the focus of the issue on bisexuality one of the most comprehensive and best uses of newsprint I have seen in a long time. We gay people heartily ignore the concerns and objections of the bisexual cohort among us whom we too often render invisible and silent by never understanding who they really are and what they have to say.

- Joseph W. Burns, Boiling Springs

MOM

It was very cool to have an article and my poem from FAB in the same issue (Jan-Feb 2015). I sent copies to my mother in VA, my mother-in-law in Pittsburgh, and have a couple copies at the house for any visitors to take when they stop by.

- Shaashawn Dial-Snowden

LOOKS GREAT

I attended a Religion and Society Board Meeting last night at MCC of the Spirit Church in Harrisburg. They had a display with copies of the LGBT Pages 2015 available. Our listing is in it and it looks great! I'll bring a copy to Mass on Sunday.

- Most Rev. Michael J. Scalzi
The Old Catholic Church, Province of the United States, Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic, The Parish Community of Saint Joseph, 4620 Linglestown Road, Harrisburg

READ IN CENTRAL VOICE

I don't remember if we thanked you for the last article you wrote about my inheritance tax victory. It was so great to have you cover my story from beginning to end. Lots of people congratulated me for doing this. I know some of them knew about it because they read it in the Central Voice. So thank you for writing about us. I hope our paths will cross again some day.

- Nancy Nixon

E-mail your thoughts to posops@aol.com

Black Lives Matter...*Some Are Gay*

Continued from page one

Harrisburg (TSTH), a local activist group springing up, as groups did nationwide, as a result of non-indictment rulings for police officers in the death of Eric Garner. He lost his life, unarmed, when pinned down by a Staten Island police officer. Before he was pinned down and restrained by a neck hold some claim amounted to choking Garner told the seven officers, "Every time you see me you want to mess with me... It stops today." After a hearing, Staten Island DA Daniel Donovan stood by the grand jury's decision not to indict NYPD Officer Daniel Pantaleo for the chokehold that lead to Garner's death.

Since forming, TSTH has presented Harrisburg City Council with a list of 10 police reform proposals, hosted two public meetings, one open-to-the-public organizing meeting, and held a protest at the Pennsylvania Farm Show. A Black Lives Matter Roundtable with city officials and organization representatives is also on the horizon.

Central Voice invited Schubert and Angela Kirkland, Sarah Begashaw, Henok Begashaw, Maureen Maxwell, Samantha Moore, all involved with TSTH, and Louie Marven, executive director of the LGBT Community Center in Harrisburg, to discuss their activity.

"We were happy to see about 50 people for each of our two community meetings in Harrisburg," Schubert says. She notes the group also appeared before Harrisburg City Council, and was well received. "There was little comment from the City Council at the time of our appearance, but we have continued our conversations with city officials toward preventative legislative changes."

If there's a theme to TSTH's organizing, it's this: What institutions in Harrisburg need to be shaken up? "By shaken up we mean what institutions need more dialogue with the communities they serve," Schubert explains. "Right now, we have questions, not answers. And we have constructive ideas to suggest," she says.

One idea is the formation of a Civilian Complaint Review Board. Typically, such review boards have both police department officials and civilians as members. They develop procedures to review complaints made by citizens around interactions with police.

"By asking for a citizens review board, we are not saying that there is a problem, but without one how would we know?" Schubert asks. "More dialogue is always better than no dialogue," she says.

"We are circulating the document at every public event because we seek feedback to re-prioritize and adjust these points in accordance with the relevancy to Harrisburg's impulse," Schubert says. About the recommendations, Harrisburg City council member Ben Allatt said, "It was generally understood from my fellow council members that these recommendations were still a work in progress, to be further developed by the group before any action on the part of council will take place."

"We are currently meeting with various City Council members and developing a framework to increase public oversight and strengthened participation with Harrisburg's law enforcement community," said Frank Henley. "It's our expectation to enter into a frank but respectful dialogue with city and police officials to begin the difficult but much needed task of implementing these law enforcement reforms," said.

Moore thinks there's an opportunity for more citywide programs to collaborate with each other. Maxwell agrees: "Lots of organizations doing good work with youth and families cannot stay open or program all year long," she points out. "All community-based programs need more money. Maybe working together can ease the overall financial burden."

Maxwell also says progress must be made in having community organizations collaborate in ways that reduce the cost for each organization. "They could offer more, survive financially, if they worked together," the seasoned advocate points out.

One way of working together involves opening up communications between minority communities situated within larger communities. For example, Harrisburg has a large African-American population and a large LGBT population. In the language of community organizing, acknowledging these crossroads is called "inter-sectionality," or in plainer words it means that some minority communities overlap.

In Harrisburg, creating dialogue among overlapping communities is beginning.

At the *Central Voice* meeting, Marven, executive director of the LGBT Community Center, detailed the first "Let's Talk" program, a collaboration between the Harrisburg YWCA and the center.

"We brought together a racially diverse group of LGBT community leaders. We are both 'minority' groups and we need to be talking to one another," Marven says. Thus the title of this story - Black Lives Matter, Some of Them Are Gay.

Kirkland saw the cooperation between the center and the YWCA as a signal that although "marriage" remains an important issue, recent successes will now move the focus of LGBT activism to other issues like race and the gay community. "The awakening started with marriage but will now continue onto other issues," she forecasts.

With regard to Black and LGBT people, Hansard says, "I think we both have to recognize each other's struggles. Both of our communities are promised three things: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." She stresses that "as long as we keep that in mind, we can help each other reach our goals, and make change."

Within the Black community churches are significant arbiters with some delivering negative messages about LGBT people. How do Blacks and LGBT people, especially when an individual is both, work together? "Facilitated conversations that do not begin with 'being gay is a choice or nurture vs. nature' is a way to start," says Shaashawn Dial-Snowden. She participated in the "Let's Talk" program.

Dial-Snowden and her spouse developed a church hopping practice: visiting different churches to find a congregation were "we felt mentally, physically, and spiritually safe and inspired to worship as individuals or a couple."

Sarah and Henok Begashaw, wife and husband, feel strongly that those participating in any community advocacy must have a firm grasp of history. "History is so important," Sarah says, a social studies teacher. "Communities can't move into a better future without knowing what happened before them," adds Henok.

As Schubert said at the group's first Town Hall meeting and the *Central Voice* meeting, "We want to hear from the community. A coalition is better than all working on the same goals separately." From the enthusism of this volunteer group, one might conclude that ThisStopsTodayHbg may well have already evolved into ThisStartsTodayHbg.

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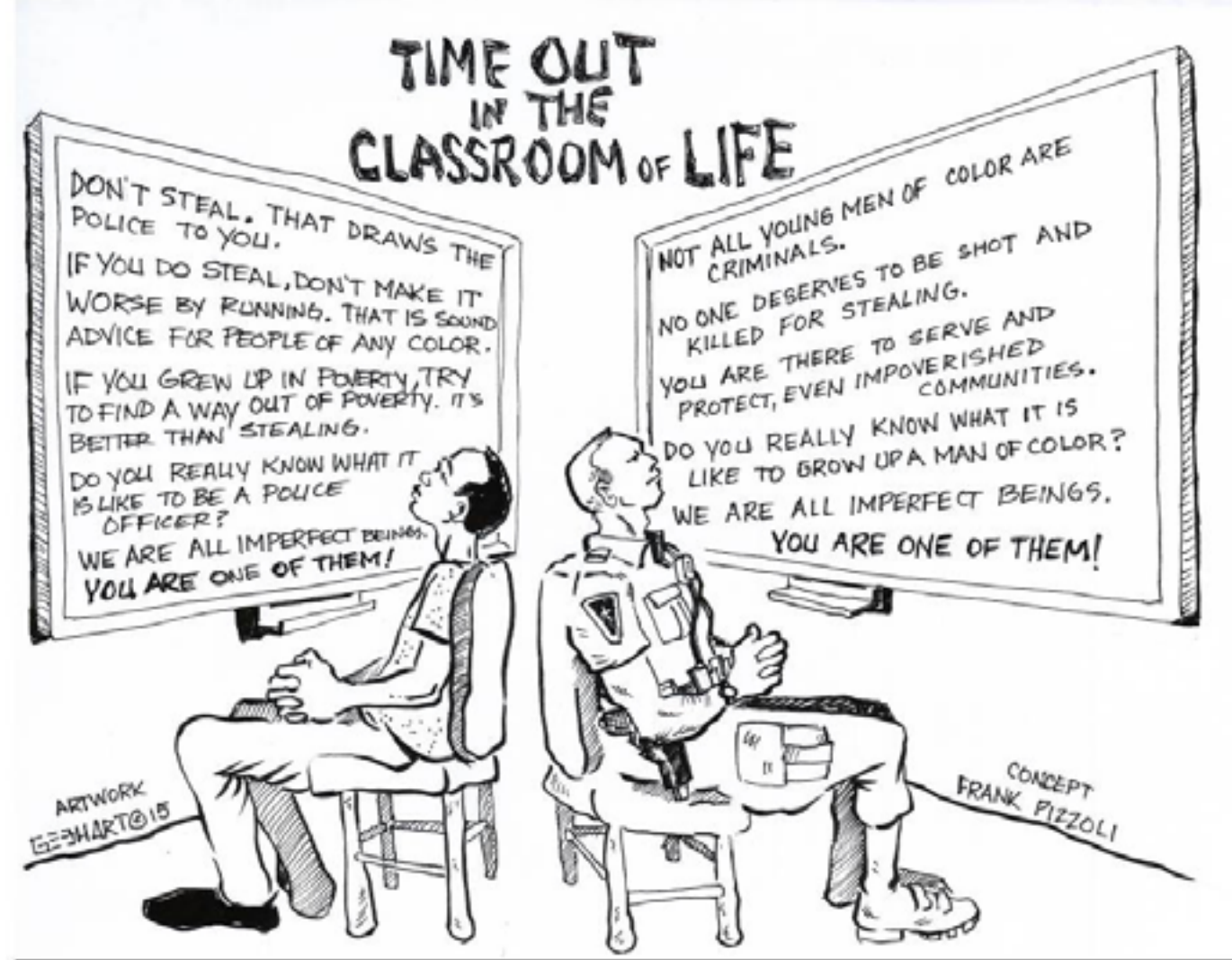
Wordpress: ThisStopsTodayHbg.wordpress.com

See photos on page 7


TIME OUT IN THE CLASSROOM OF LIFE
DON'T STEAL. THAT DRAWS THE POLICE TO YOU.
IF YOU DO STEAL, DON'T MAKE IT WORSE BY RUNNING. THAT IS SOUND ADVICE FOR PEOPLE OF ANY COLOR.
IF YOU GREW UP IN POVERTY, TRY TO FIND A WAY OUT OF POVERTY. IT'S BETTER THAN STEALING.
DO YOU REALLY KNOW WHAT IT IS LIKE TO BE A POLICE OFFICER?
WE ARE ALL IMPERFECT BEINGS.
YOU ARE ONE OF THEM!
NOT ALL YOUNG MEN OF COLOR ARE CRIMINALS.
NO ONE DESERVES TO BE SHOT AND KILLED FOR STEALING.
YOU ARE THERE TO SERVE AND PROTECT, EVEN IMPOVERISHED COMMUNITIES.
DO YOU REALLY KNOW WHAT IT IS LIKE TO GROW UP A MAN OF COLOR?
WE ARE ALL IMPERFECT BEINGS.
YOU ARE ONE OF THEM!
ARTWORK GEEHART@15
CONCEPT FRANK PIZZOLI

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• Starkville, MISS Repeals Resolution

The eastern Mississippi city of Starkville - which last year made headlines for becoming the first city in the Magnolia State to pass an anti-discrimination resolution - quietly repealed it in a closed-door session. Lawmakers also rescinded a policy that extended health insurance coverage to same-sex domestic partners of city employees. The *Commercial Dispatch* reported: Starkville Mayor Parker Wiseman slammed aldermen Wednesday for removing LGBT-friendly policies without public debate and began the process vetoing the board's action. Five aldermen repealed the city's equality resolution - a non-discrimination policy that included language protecting lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender employees - and ended its plus-one insurance option available to workers' same-sex partners after three hours of closed-door deliberations.

• Mary Yu Sworn In

Washington State Supreme Court Associate Justice Mary Yu was formally sworn in on Monday, marking the start of a new chapter for the state's first openly LGBT justice. After being appointed to fill a vacancy by Gov. Jay Inslee in May 2014, Yu ran unopposed in 2014 and was the state's top vote-getter. She has the option of running for a full six-year term after finishing out the remainder of her current term, which ends in 2017. Upon her appointment, Yu became not only the first openly LGBT person to sit on the state's highest court, but also its first Asian-American and Latina justice. She previously served on the King County Superior Court and is a graduate of the University of Notre Dame's Law School.

• Mississippi School Board: No GSA

Mississippi's Rankin County school board members recently approved a change in the district's school club policy after a group reportedly tried to form a gay club. Superintendent Lynn Weathersby brought up the issue. "There has been a group wanting to form a gay club. I talked to (board attorney) Freddie and several administrators about what we could legally do to limit organizations like that on campus that we don't want to endorse and don't want," Weathersby said. Weathersby said after talking to the the board attorney and administrators, he found that the best strategy for limiting organizations is by requiring parents to sign a consent form to allow their students to participate in the club. Board attorney Fred Harrell echoed Weathersby, saying a gay club might violate education standards and principles adopted by the school district such as abstinence-only sexual education. At press time, the district added to its official statement that "such a group would violate the districts abstinence only education policy." Under the Federal Equal Access Act, any school that receives government funding and has at least one other non-curricular club must also allow a GSA.

• CA Judges: No More Discrimination

California judges will no longer be allowed to participate in nonprofit youth groups, such as the Boy Scouts of America, that discriminate against LGBT people, according to the *Bay Area Reporter*. At the same time the justices lifted a ban on judges belonging to a military organization now that gays and lesbians can serve openly in the U.S. Armed Services. The change comes as transgender individuals are still barred from becoming service members, though the policy is reportedly under review. In the case of the scouting group, although it now allows out youth to belong, it continues to ban LGBT adults from serving as troop leaders. The proposed rule change was sent out for public comment last year, and the change was supported by the California Judges Association. The amended rule is now consistent with the American Bar Association's Model Code of Judicial Conduct. Judges had until Jan. 21 to comply with the new rule.

• Isn't Misleading a Sin?

The president of the advertising company that's was hosting an "ex-gay" therapy billboard in Dallas says the company was misled about the nature of the sign or he wouldn't have allowed it to go up, according to Towerload which broke the story about the billboard ad paid for by David Pickup, a well-known practitioner of ex-gay therapy in Dallas and one of the authors of a plank endorsing reparative therapy in the Texas GOP platform. Terry Kafka, president of Impact Outdoor Advertising, told Towleroad that Pickup led the company's sales manager to believe the billboard was an advertisement for couples therapy. Kafka said he hadn't even heard of reparative therapy until he began getting complaints about the billboard. "We were misinformed," Kafka said. "I'm not a proponent of it. I'm not on that bandwagon. When we have a controversial advertisement, we always discuss it internally, and we didn't even discuss it because our sales person was under the impression it was for couples therapy." Pickup refused to address Kafka's allegations. "I can't comment on that, because nobody contacted me from the company," Pickup said. "I thought that the main thing this sign would do was raise awareness for those people who really want and need this therapy."

• Bathrooms Conform to Gender Identity

Last year, Atherton High School in Louisville approved a policy ensuring that transgender students can access all spaces and activities in accordance with their gender identity, but now a Kentucky state senator wants to ban all transgender students from safely using the bathroom. Sen. C.B. Embry Jr. (R) has introduced what he calls the Kentucky Student Privacy Act (SB 76), which would force all students to be identified by their "biological sex" as determined by their chromosomes and what was assigned to them according to their anatomy at birth, essentially erasing transgender students. The bill requires that bathrooms and locker rooms must be divided according to "biological sex," and schools are forbidden from accommodating transgender students by allowing them access to any facility "designated for use by students of the opposite biological sex while students of the opposite biological sex are present or could be present." Embry also wants to actually punish schools (like Atherton) that respect trans students' identities. The bill provides that any student who encounters "a person of the opposite biological sex" in a bathroom or locker room shall have a legal cause of action if it's because the school gave the trans student permission or didn't explicitly prohibit the trans student from using that facility. The "aggrieved" student would be entitled to $2,500 from the offending school "for each instance" he or she encountered a trans student in a sex-divided facility.

• Tiffany & Co, Features Same-sex Couple

For the first time, Tiffany & Co. is featuring a gay couple in its latest engagement campaign. (The pair are not models

but an unnamed, real-life NYC couple. "Nowadays, the road to marriage is no longer linear, and true love can happen more than once with love stories coming in a variety of forms," said Linda Buckley, Tiffany & Co. VP of North American PR, in a statement to ELLE.com."

• Supreme Court to Decide on Marriage

Following its decision last fall to effectively green light same-sex marriage in 11 states, the U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to hear six consolidated marriage cases out of Ohio, Michigan, Tennessee, and Kentucky this term, with a ruling potentially by June. The court's review will take place on a transformed legal landscape, with gay couples being able to marry in 36 states, covering two-thirds of the American people, and with nearly 60 federal and state courts having struck down discriminatory marriage bans in the past two years. "The Supreme Court's decision begins what we hope will be the last chapter in our campaign to win marriage nationwide - and it's time," said Evan Wolfson, president of Freedom to Marry. America is ready for the freedom to marry. But couples are still discriminated against in 14 states, and the patchwork of discrimination harms families and businesses throughout the country, he said. Virtually every court up until this point, including the 4th, 7th, 9th, and 10th Circuits and a 59% majority of the American people, including Republicans under age 45, support the freedom to marry. In his sixth State of the union address, President Barack Obama noted progress toward same-sex couples' freedom to marry in America, calling marriage for same-sex couples "a story of freedom across our country, a civil right now legal in states that seven in ten Americans call home." According to Time magazine, the speech also marks the first time a president has said the words "bisexual" or "transgender" in a State of the Union address.

• Phila's Paul Steinke Announces Council Run

Former Reading Terminal Market general manager Paul Steinke announce his campaign for Philadelphia City Council at-Large on Jan. 13. For the past 13 years, Steinke has managed operations of the Reading Terminal Market where he oversaw a 30% increase in visits and a $4 million renovation and expansion, according to Joe Corrigan of Edge Hill Strategies. Steinke also served as the first finance director for the Center City District and as the first executive director for the University City District. An economist by training, Steinke plans to make increased opportunity and growth for all of Philadelphia's families the focus of his campaign, according his campaign announcement.
He lives in West Philadelphia with David Ade, his partner of nearly 20 years.

10 Proposals *Continued from page 4*

illness, safe conflict de-escalation, cultural awareness pertaining to Harrisburg's diverse landscape, constructive community policing, and the elimination of discriminatory profiling and "broken windows" policing.

7. A review and reform of HPD's recruiting and hiring policies, as they relate to diversity issues and the need for psychological evaluations and implicit racial bias testing for all candidates.

8. Regular community meetings in each part of town with HPD officers, This Stops Today Harrisburg community representatives, and residents.

9. The possible hiring of 1 to 2 police anthropologists to translate policing to the public and bridge ethical considerations in the implementation of crime prevention policies; and to create policy and practices that highlight the spirit of service in policing and emphasize legitimacy, transparency, and public confidence.

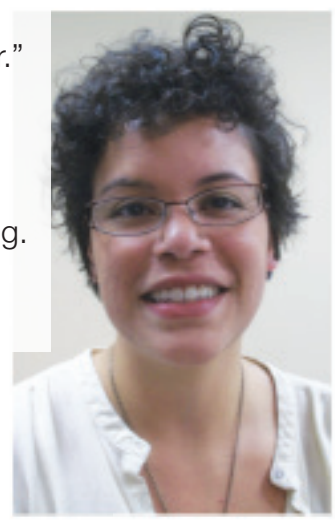
10. A conversation about HPD's relationship with the Dauphin County Crisis Response Team, which has received 144 assault rifles through the free Department of Defense program.

National Events Spur Local Activism

Lauren Hansard, *(pictured left)* lead organizer of Dec. 13, 2014 "Die-in" on steps of state Capital. Hansard spearheaded a local link to the national, organic movement "Black Lives Matter."

Sarah Schubert, *(pictured right)* lead organizer of ThisStopsTodayHbg.

See full story, "Black Lives Matter" on page 1



Photos by Central Voice

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❶❷ *Dec. 13, 2014 protestors on the steps of the state Capital.*

❸ *Members of ThisStopsTodayHbg Sarah and Henok Begashaw.*

❹ *From left: Hallie Stucky, Louie Marven, executive director of the LGBT community Center, Liz Laribee attending the Dec. 13, 2014 "Die-in."*

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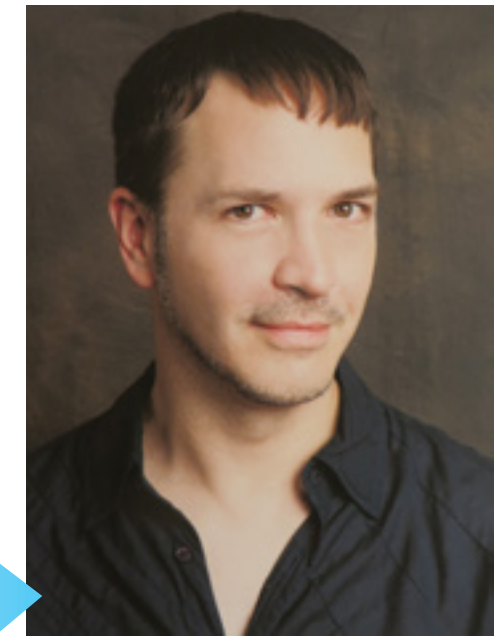
All Grown Up and Back in the Limelight

CLUB KID MICHAEL ALIG



By Winnie McCroy
Central Voice NYC Correspondent

Released last May 5 after 17 years in prison for murder, Michael Alig wasted no time getting his groove back.

Now 48, the South Bend, Indiana transplant to New York City is known for forging the Club Kids, a group of young club goers he led in the late '80s/early '90s with his long-time best friend, James St. James.

Alig moved to the city to study at Fordham University. He dropped out and began working at Danceteria in 1983 as a bus boy. A natural party thrower, he quickly rose in New York's party scene and was mentored by Peter Gatien, dubbed the King of New York Clubs and owner of Limelight, Palladium, Club USA and Tunnel.

Zeitgeist followers said Alig revived a dead club scene that faltered post Andy Warhol and Studio 54. In 1996, Alig's life came crashing down around him. He pleaded guilty to manslaughter after killing and dismembering Andre "Angel" Melendez in a confrontation over a drug debt.

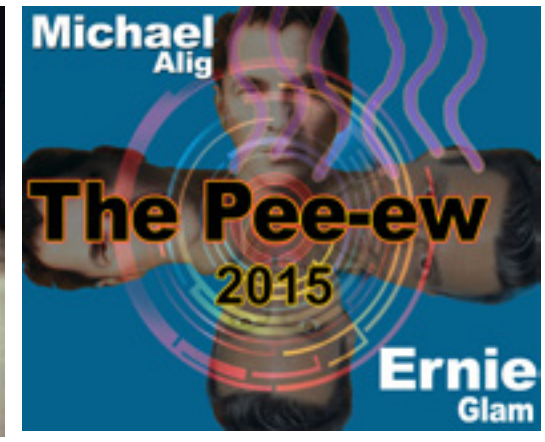
For Out.com, Michael Musto reminisced that as a talent contest judge at the iconic Danceteria back in the Wild West '80s, Alig cooed to him that he'd give Musto "sex, drugs, and rock and roll" if he voted for him.

"Much as I like rock and roll, I didn't grant him the nod because his talent was merely go-go dancing, and besides, he was awful at it -- awkward and completely lacking in rhythm. It was behind the scenes that the guy really shined (like a possessed jack o'lantern)," Musto wrote.

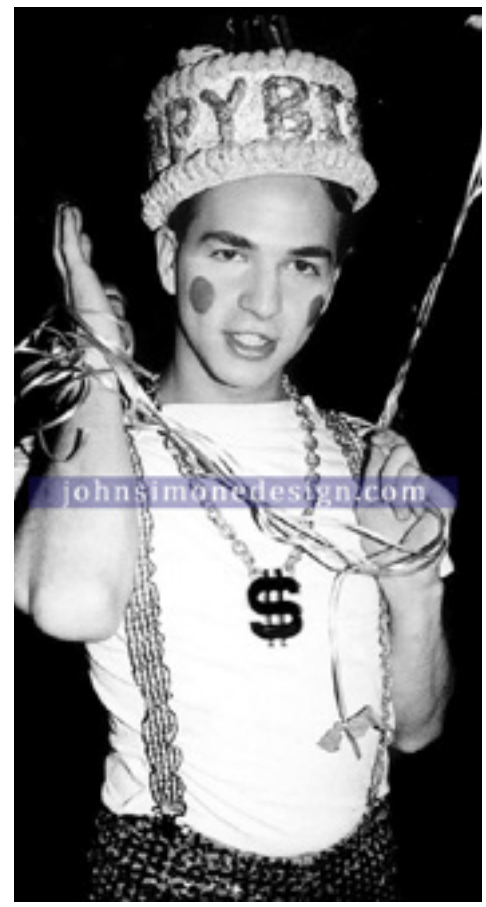
Alig organized the weekly Disco 2000 bash at Limelight, which featured a Weimaresque presentation called the Unnatural Acts revue. The location is now an upscale spa, a sobering reminder of how much the world changes while one is in prison.

He's shining again. Alig is humping for a YouTube show called Pee-ew on Twitter, writing, "We want a professional studio for the Pee-ew and will get one from YouTube if we get 5000 subscribers. Will u please subscribe to our show?"

Winnie McCroy, *Central Voice* NYC correspondent, caught up with Alig in this special interview.



From Michael Alig's Club Kid Days to an entrepreneurial adventure since release from prison.



Central Voice: You spoke of having to do this interview after your curfew. What are the terms of that? Does it cramp your nightlife?

Michael Alig: I do have a curfew; it's 8 p.m. every night until 7 a.m. the next morning. It hasn't really cramped my style, because I haven't felt the desire to go out.

CV: You've been out of prison for six months. What have you been doing?

MA: I've been spending most of my time doing interviews, being interviewed by people wanting to know what I'll be doing for a living once I stop doing all these interviews.

CV: Have you reconnected with any old friends?

MA: Yes, I am in touch with Jenny, James, Keoki, Walt, Sesi and the other club kids... probation doesn't prohibit that.

CV: Which new friends have you made?

MA: It's interesting, because I have the same set of friends (with possibly a few exceptions) that I did thirty years ago.

CV: Tell readers about your YouTube series Pee-eww?

MA: The Pee-ew is a daily talk show that I started with my friend Ernie Glam that originally we were doing just for fun... but it's gotten so big in just a few short months. In fact, we met just this afternoon with a team of investors who want to fund the program for us.

CV: About your time in prison, were you ever bullied or beaten up?

MA: I think I was pretty lucky because I was never really bullied or treated bad by anyone in prison. I saw a lot of people get cut across the face and necks, but nothing like that ever happened to me, thankfully.

CV: I read that you used drugs in prison as a way to avoid the difficult parts of life. What finally prompted you to get clean?

MA: Yeah, unfortunately I have always used drugs as a crutch to help me get through difficult situations. Nothing really changed in prison... until a therapist explained it all to me, I mean really broke it down and explained that people thought I was a sociopath.

CV: Did you attend AA and NA meetings in prison?

MA: I did attend AA and NA meetings in prison... they're mandatory for inmates whose urine has tested positive for illegal drugs.

CV: In your 17 years in prison, what's the most important lesson you learned?

MA: I think the number one thing I learned is patience! I was an extremely impatient person before I went to prison. If I wanted something, I wanted to have it right away and if you couldn't get it for me I'd go someplace else. Being in prison changed all that for me.

CV: Limelight is now an upscale spa. What do you think about how things have changed?

MA: Limelight was all set to become this terrible shopping mall, but then they turned it into a disco gym [David Barton Gym]. Which is probably a bit weird, as most of the guys old enough now to go to a gym were young enough back then to go to the club.

CV: You were renowned for being able to identify the hottest new scene -- so what's the hottest new club in New York?

MA: I don't know! Like I said, I don't really go out anymore in NYC. The only big clubs even left are Pacha and Space, and while neither can compare to Limelight in size they're all we have, so I guess they'd be the best.

CV: You were also known as the city's biggest trendsetter. What's hot now?

MA: Well, if I have started any trends at all, it's that it's no longer cool to go out to nightclubs. I mean, I suppose I would if there were some decent ones around...

CV: One thing that hasn't changed is the high rates of HIV infection among gay/bi men. What's your take on that?

MA: I definitely think more and more young people are having sex and it's incredible to see it happening because my generation always seemed so afraid of [getting HIV]. Now it's like having a common cold.

CV: What would you like today's Club Kids to know?

MA: To love themselves, to appreciate their inner kookiness and turn your so-called weaknesses into your strengths.

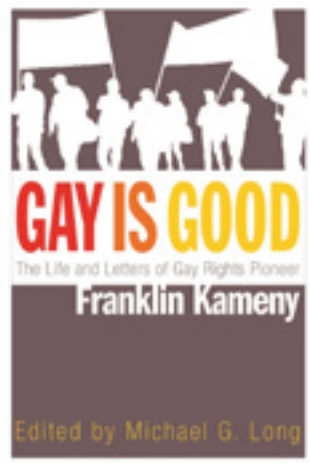
Local Author's Book

Continued from page 1

books on politics, religion, and civil rights. He is the editor, most recently, of *Beyond Home Plate: Jackie Robinson on Life after Baseball.*

Central Voice: What has the response been to your work on Kameny? from the academic community? from the LGBT community?

Michael Long: The book has just been released, but the response thus far has been so positive. Kameny's close friends, like Charles Frances and Bob Witech of Washington, DC, have been generous in their praise of the book.



CV: Some advocates are outright sending the book to others?

ML: Malcolm Lazin of Equality Forum has decided to send the book to leading LGBT activists across the country. Early reviews have also been positive, identifying the book as a "must read." I'm pleased about this mostly because it helps to advance the rich and inimitable legacy of Frank Kameny. This of us who fight for LGBT rights stand on his shoulders, and the book helps us understand how incredibly broad his shoulders were.

CV: Currently, there is lots of dialogue about the intersections of race and LGBT issues. What are your thoughts?

ML: One of the most important things about Kameny is that early on he, like Edward Sagarin and others, identified gays and lesbians as an oppressed minority. That was no small move, and it allowed him to analyze discrimination against gays and lesbians as somewhat akin to discrimination against people of color. It also helped him articulate the need for civil rights and liberties for gays and lesbians early on.

CV: Wasn't Kameny an early petitioner of the US Supreme Court?

ML: His 1961 petition to the US Supreme Court--a landmark document--did exactly that while at the same time telling the justices that homosexuality was moral. It's breathtaking material. Kameny also turned to the civil rights movement for inspiration and instruction for advancing civil rights for oppressed gays and lesbians. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Stokely Carmichael are among those who influenced his deliberate efforts to politicize the homophile movement and turn it into a political power that politicians could no longer ignore. So Kameny actually helped to create the intersections of race and LGBT issues that we continue to experience today.

Things you may not know about Franklin Kameny -

- *During the height of the Lavender Scare, openly fought the US government for firing him because he was gay (1958).*
- *Led a long campaign to force the US Civil Service Commission to permit the hiring of gays and lesbians individuals for federal jobs, including those requiring security clearances (1957 on).*
- *Filed first US Supreme Court petition arguing that gays and lesbians were an oppressed minority deserving equal treatment under law, and that homosexuality was moral (1961).*
- *Co-founded the Mattachine Society of Washington, the nation's first organization dedicated solely to securing civil rights and liberties for gays and lesbians (1961).*
- *Co-founded regional and national gay and lesbian groups designed to politicize the movement and secure and advance political power in government and civil society (1963 on).*
- *Organized the first White House picketing by a group seeking civil rights and liberties for gays and lesbians. Similar picketing soon followed in front of the US Civil Service Commission, Independence Hall in Philadelphia, and the Pentagon (1965).*
- *Criticized numerous leading media personalities, including Ann Landers, Johnny Carson, and Rona Barrett, for their anti-gay views (1966 on).*
- *Staged protests ("zaps") for gay rights at American Psychiatric Association conventions, eventually forcing the APA to delist homosexuality as a mental disorder (1971 on).*
- *Became the first openly gay candidate for the US Congress (1971).*
- *Acted as counsel to numerous gays and lesbians facing discrimination in the US military and served as a driving force behind the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell."*

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Does Congress Have LGBT Protections?

By Amanda Terkel, Julia Craven, Jesse Rifkin, Maxwell Tani, The Huffington Post

It's still legal for members of Congress to fire their employees based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. That's because there is no federal law protecting lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender employees from workplace discrimination, even though many states have their own policies that are more inclusive.

Many lawmakers, however, have gone above and beyond existing law -- which requires protections on the basis of race, national origin, color, sex, religion, age and disability -- to include their LGBT staffers. Each office writes its own employee policies, and some are including sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression in their anti-discrimination protections.

House Minority Whip Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) asked House Rules Committee Chairman Pete Sessions (R-Texas) last month to include protections for LGBT employees in the House rules package. Sessions declined.

This week, Hoyer, Rep. Mike Honda (D-Calif.), LGBT Equality Caucus Co-Chair Rep. Jared Polis (D-Colo.) and House Administration Committee Ranking Member Robert Brady (D-Pa.) urged more of their colleagues to adopt LGBT-inclusive policies, even providing sample language for them to use.

"Under the current House Rules, an employee who is lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender may be fired, demoted, denied a promotion, or otherwise discriminated against because of his or her sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression," the letter stated. "This remains the case even while hundreds of LGBT individuals employed by the House are advancing the work of the Congress and are playing an important role in helping us serve our constituents."

Individual office policies are, for the most part, not made public, and there's no record of how many offices do include LGBT-inclusive protections.

So *The Huffington Post* contacted every member of Congress this week to find out. One hundred eight offices responded, and perhaps not surprisingly, ones with such guidelines were more likely to get back to us.

Twenty-six Senate offices and 71 House offices said they either have protections for sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression in place or will be adding them soon. Since it's the start of a new Congress, many offices are still writing, or reviewing, their policies. A few offices -- including Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) and Reps. Jim McGovern (D-Mass.), Adam Schiff (D-Calif.) and Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.) -- said they would now be changing their policies to include those categories in response to the Hoyer push.

Other offices have had their policies in place for quite some time. The office of Rep. Sam Farr (D-Calif.), for example, sent over its internal policy memo from 1993 that barred discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. His office now includes gender identity protections as well.

Rep. Ruben Gallego (D-Ariz.) is a new member whose office is still writing its policies. But spokeswoman Pili Tobar said they will add LGBT protections.

"I think a lot of members take guidelines from others," Tobar said. "This is something we definitely were going to include, so it was perfect when they put out the sample language ... so that we could just go ahead and know that this has also been vetted."

Three offices said they do not have policies protecting LGBT employees from discrimination. Again, these offices aren't breaking the law. In 2013, the Senatepassed the Employment Non-Discrimination Act to bar workplace discrimination against LGBT people, but the House never took it up. Therefore, LGBT workplace discrimination is still legal on the federal level.

Some offices without LGBT-inclusive protections said they didn't have any written policies on the matter but did not discriminate anyway.

"We don't have any written policies, and the issue has not come up yet," Rep. Alan Grayson (D-Fla.) said in a statement. "If it did, I would act in accordance with the anti-discrimination legislation that I've supported."

"Nothing [is] written but [we] have had gay and diverse staff -- everyone treated equal," said Michael Andel, spokesman for Rep. David Scott (D-Ga.).

But Mitchell Rivard, the spokesman for the LGBT Congressional Staff Association and a staffer for Rep. Dan Kildee (D-Mich.), said it's important to have these protections in print. "Members can -- and should –- make a simple change to their office policy to prohibit employment discrimination in their offices based on sexual orientation and gender identity," he said.

Four of the offices that responded said their policies cover sexual orientation but not gender identity. Four others -- Reps. Mark Amodei (R-Nev.), James Clyburn (D-S.C.), Mark Meadows (R-N.C.) and Charlie Rangel (D-N.Y.) -- said they don't discriminate but didn't specify whether they have written policies covering LGBT staffers.

Below is the list of offices that do or don't include anti-discrimination policies covering sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression. The list is, at press time, incolplete since not offices have answered. Some inquiries may not have reached the right people, especially since it's the start of a new session of Congress.

PENNSYLVANIA

So far, responses indicate that Senator Bob Casey offers LGBT inclusive protections as well as House members Robert Brady (D-Pa.), Michael Doyle (D-Pa.), Patrick Murphy (D-Fla.).

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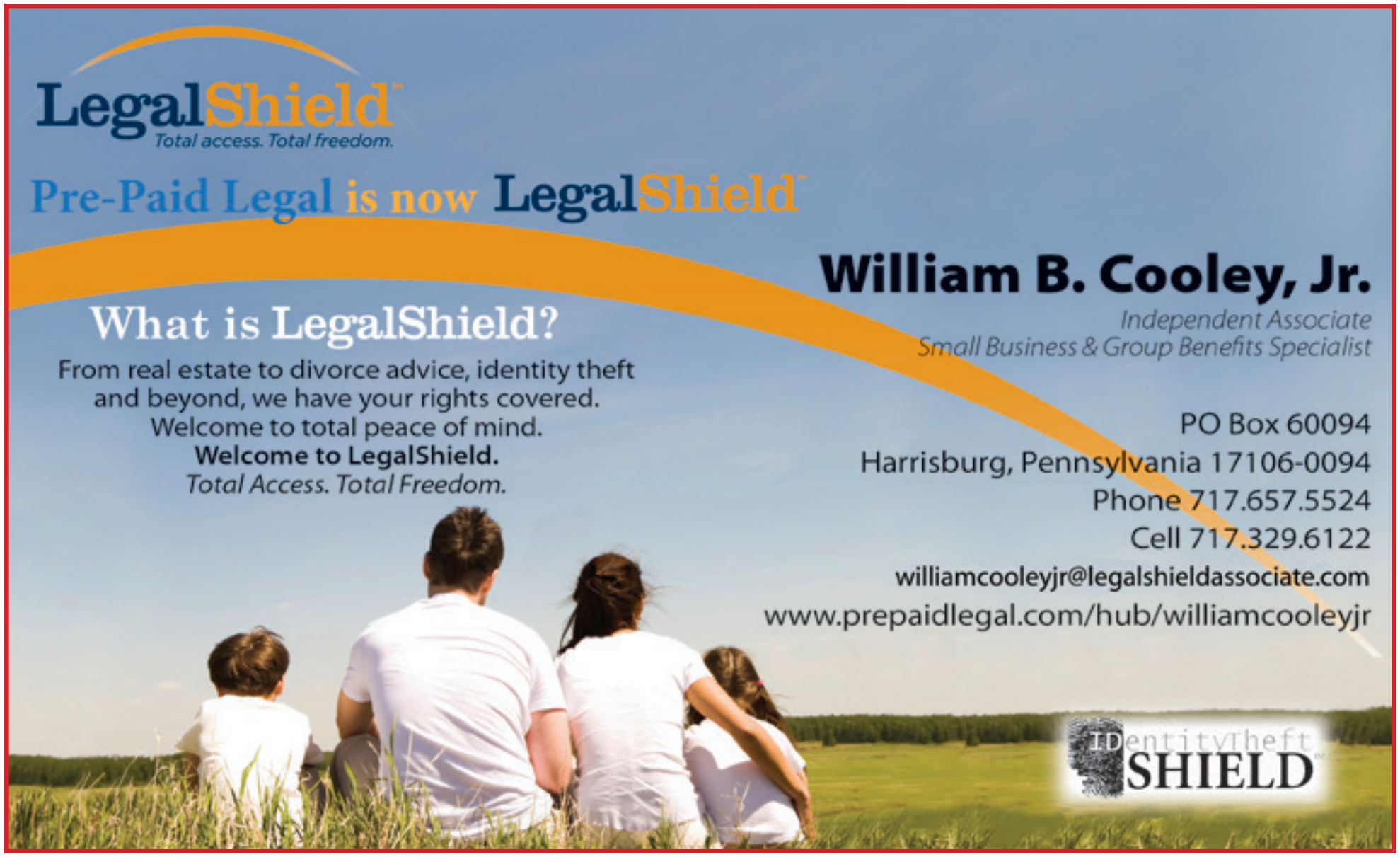


legal column

By Leo L. Dunn, Attorney at Law

Online Identity After Death

Who owns your online identity, email, Facebook pics, etc. when you die? Can ownership of online stuff be left in a Will? To your partner, legally married or not legally married? A friend? Family?

Unfortunately, there is no simple answer to this question. The law in this area is unsettled and not consistent. We expect that at some point in the near future the U.S. Congress will rule on this issue and give us some clear guidelines. At least two bills have been introduced in the Pennsylvania Legislature that attempt to set rules regarding this electronic identity.

Thus, I will not attempt to explain any of the potential ownership problems and instead will spell out some possible solutions. First, you should discuss this with your attorney as you have your Will and other estate planning documents created. A possible solution for most individuals is to have a sheet of paper with all of their online accounts listed along with passwords and user names AND how to delete information and close the account.

Yes, I know this goes against all recommendations from the various IT gurus, but I have one additional step – lock this paper into a home safe or file cabinet along with a listing of all your other assets, doctors' and insurance contact and other account information that a person handling your estate would need to deal with as part of estate settlement. Then make sure your executor knows where the list is and can readily access it in the event of your death. Make sure they know you want them to access and delete your online accounts.

What does this do? It allows the executor to access your online accounts, delete all information and then close the account. The executor should work with your attorney to close the accounts.

Will this work for everyone?

No. Some individuals have online materials that are valuable because of their content. In these cases, you should work with your attorney to create documents that provide, as best the law allows, for your account to transfer to the ownership of your estate or beneficiaries. This would include listing the account in your Will, power-of-attorney, and possibly a separate document specifically for your online information. Such content should also be copyrighted and the copyrights specifically provided for in your Will.

Hopefully this helps get you to discuss this asset area with your estate attorney.

Leo Dunn is an attorney and counselor-at-law practicing in the Harrisburg area with a focus on the estate planning needs of the GLBT community. He may be reached at leo@leodunnlaw.com.

LGBT Protections *Continued from previous page*

Offices Offering LGBT-Inclusive Protections:

***Senate**: Tammy Baldwin (D-Wis.), Michael Bennet (D-Colo.), Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.), Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.), Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio), Ben Cardin (D-Md.), Bob Casey (D-Pa.), Susan Collins (R-Maine), Chris Coons (D-Del.), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.), Tim Kaine (D-Va.), Angus King (I-Maine), Pat Leahy (D-Vt.), Claire McCaskill (D-Mo.), Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.), Barbara Mikulski (D-Md.), Chris Murphy (D-Conn.), Patty Murray (D-Wash.), Gary Peters (D-Mich.), Harry Reid (D-Nev.), Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.), Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.), Mark Warner (D-Va.), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.), Ron Wyden (D-Ore.)*

***House**: Alma Adams (D-N.C.), Don Beyer (D-Va.), Robert Brady (D-Pa.), Matthew Cartwright (D-Pa.), David Cicilline (D-R.I.), Lacy Clay (D-Mo.), Emanuel Cleaver (D-Mo.), Gerald Connolly (D-Va.), Jim Cooper (D-Tenn.), Joseph Crowley (D-N.Y.), Susan Davis (D-Calif.), Diana DeGette (D-Colo.), Mark DeSaulnier (D-Calif.), Ted Deutch (D-Fla.), Mario Diaz-Balart (R-Fla.), Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.), Lloyd Doggett (D-Texas), Michael Doyle (D-Pa.), Elizabeth Esty (D-Conn.), Sam Farr (D-Calif.), Chaka Fattah (D-Pa.), Marcia Fudge (D-Ohio), Ruben Gallego (D-Ariz.), John Garamendi (D-Calif.), Raul Grijalva (D-Ariz.), Janice Hahn (D-Calif.), Alcee Hastings (D-Fla.), Mike Honda (D-Calif.), Steny Hoyer (D-Md.), Jared Huffman (D-Calif.), Robin Kelly (D-Ill.), Joseph Kennedy (D-Mass.), Daniel Kildee (D-Mich.), Rick Larsen (D-Wash.), Barbara Lee (D-Calif.), Ted Lieu (D-Calif.), David Loebsack (D-Iowa), Zoe Lofgren (D-Calif.), Alan Lowenthal (D-Calif.), Stephen Lynch (D-Mass.), Ben Ray Lujan (D-N.M.), Sean Maloney (D-N.Y.), Jim McGovern (D-Mass.), Patrick Murphy (D-Fla.), Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.), Donald Norcross (D-N.J.), Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), Ed Perlmutter (D-Colo.), Scott Peters (D-Calif.), Chellie Pingree (D-Maine), Mark Pocan (D-Wis.), Jared Polis (D-Colo.), David Price (D-N.C.), Mike Quigley (D-Ill.), Kathleen Rice (D-N.Y.), Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-Calif.), Dutch Ruppersberger (D-Md.), Tim Ryan (D-Ohio), Jan Schakowsky (D-Ill.), Adam Schiff (D-Calif.), Bobby Scott (D-Va.), Brad Sherman (D-Calif.), Krysten Sinema (D-Ariz.), Louise Slaughter (D-N.Y.), Jackie Speier (D-Calif.), Mark Takano (D-Calif.), Dina Titus (D-Nev.), Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.), Marc Veasey (D-Texas), Peter Welch (D-Vt.), John Yarmuth (D-Ky.)*

Offices with Sexual Orientation Protections Only:

***Senate**: Tom Udall (D-N.M.)* ***House**: Keith Ellison (D-Minn.), Michelle Lujan Grisham (D-N.M.), Kurt Schrader (D-Ore.)*

Offices Without LGBT-Inclusive Protections:

***Senate**: Mike Enzi (R-Wyo.)* ***House**: Alan Grayson (D-Fla.), David Scott (D-Ga.)*

Ally in the Academy

By Trum Simmons
Harrisburg Area Community College

What We Talk About When We Talk About Change

Perhaps I should begin by saying here is your ally back in the academy, for having retired from full-time employment at HACC, I am now teaching my LGBT studies class as an adjunct instructor.

As this is my only class, as opposed to the former four or five classes a semester, I tend to take it very seriously, perhaps too seriously. But being in the classroom twice a week with a group of interesting students sure gets my intellectual and emotional juices going.

It's a great time to be studying the past, present and future of LGBT life in the U.S. and around the world. Change—mostly for the better—seems to be speeding up, and it's hard to keep track of everything. As you read, we are eagerly awaiting the U.S. Supreme Court's decision on same-sex marriage after some 36 states already have decided the issue favorably.

Who among us doesn't want the same from SCOTUS (Supreme Court of the United States?) When I developed the HACC class in 2000, who would have thought that we were this close to such significant change? The shift in public opinion on this issue during the past few years has been astounding. And even five years ago, would a Pennsylvania governor have appointed a transgender person to his cabinet?

Will we chuckle at our ever-expanding alphabet of sexual and gender identity?

At the same time, it hasn't been easy to effect the change we've been fighting for, and indeed social justice does not come easily. Even if SCOTUS decides for same-sex marriage, millions of Americans will still be against it, so we will have to see how that plays out over the next several years, even decades.

We've learned to live divided over abortion rights ever since the 1970s, so perhaps we can survive ongoing conflicts over the marriage divide.

Change is not easy. Consider the growing list of letters that are being added to the time-honored LGBTQ. For many it's now LGBTQIA, and for some there are three or four more. Then there are those who say we should stop using the letters, as they tend to box people in.

It's fine that we don't all agree on the appropriate language, because there is a lot of ambiguity when it comes to how we express ourselves. People who see the world in black-and-white terms are not seeing the whole world, in my view. If you can't see the grays, you're missing a lot, and things that seem simple on the surface are not nearly so when you begin to dig deeper.

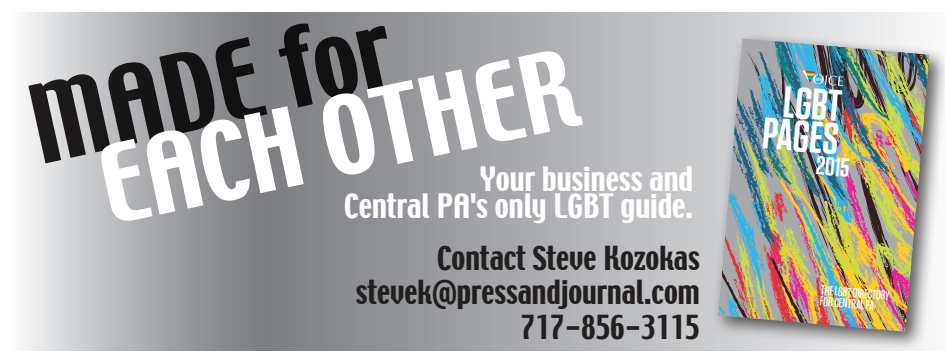
It is interesting to consider what future generations will say about ours. In my class we talk about what historians call "presentism," the attempt to understand the past by applying the values of the present.

If we try to understand slavery while looking through the lens of our present values, we won't do very well. We need to try to understand what it was like according to the values of, say, 1740 or 1840, not by those of 2015. We ask, How could Thomas Jefferson have owned slaves when he knew slavery was wrong? We might do better to ask, How is it he knew slavery was wrong when most of his colleagues approved of it?

We can say the same about people who in 1840 or 1940 (or 2015 for that matter) believed that marriage meant one man and one woman. Looking through the lens of today, from today's "enlightened" view, we may say, How could they believe such a thing? We need to study history by putting ourselves in the shoes of those who lived it.

Our textbook cites Judith Halberstam's concept of what she calls "perverse presentism." She says we need to be careful not to impose current ideas about sexual and gender identity on past generations. Our authors do not consider contemporary labels as necessarily useful in describing people in the past.

I often wonder what future historians will say about some of the notions we hold dear today. Will Americans 100 years from now chuckle at our ever-expanding alphabet of sexual and gender identity? What do you think?



Pennsylvania Student Equality Coalition Poised for Action

By Central Voice

Founded in 2011 Pennsylvania Student Equality Coalition is the recipient of a $100,000 grant from the Queer Youth Fund of the Liberty Hill Foundation. PSEC is the first grant recipient from Pennsylvania.

The organization is an entirely youth-led and youth-run statewide LGBTQ organization and is modeled directly on the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee or SNCC (pronounced Snick) which was the main youth arm of the US Civil Rights Movement.

Jason Landau Goodman is executive director. Turner Stulting is a convener of the organization's Coordinating Committee. The organization maintains field offices in Pittsburgh, Harrisburg, and Philadelphia. Stutling and Goodman provided *Central Voice* with information on the organization.

Central Voice: What is PSEC's governing structure?

Stutling: We are the first entirely youth-led and youth-run statewide LGBTQ organization in the nation. Over 30 presidents and leaders of student organizations came together at Penn State - University Park in January 2011 where they unanimously voted to form an independent youth-led organization in order to unite efforts at our schools and communities across the state.

CV: Is PSEC a membership organization? How many members? Geography of membership?

Stutling: LGBTQ youth groups at schools and within local communities may affiliate themselves into the coalition as a member organization. Each member organization has direct access to their counterparts across the state, immediate connections with local partners, and strong relationships with local and state legislators. We use our collective networks to mobilize our communities toward social justice for all LGBTQ Pennsylvanians.

Our member organizations vote each year at the Pennsylvania Youth Action Conference for two Coordinating Committee members to represent and organize within our nine regions. PSEC Central PA includes nearly every college LGBTQ student group in the region. Founding members include Penn State Harrisburg's Capital Alliance and Millersville University's GSA.

We currently have over 40 active member organizations and are connected with more than 100 GSAs throughout the state.

The PSEC Coordinating Committee is facilitated by an elected Convener and Assistant Convener. I serve as the Convener of the Coordinating Committee, in addition to being the President of the Bucknell University GSA. In my capacity as Convener, I am regularly on the road to meet with member organization leaders, recruit new youth activists, speak at events and rallies, and organize with local teams on the ground. Our Assistant Convener is Peter Fair, a student at Harrisburg Area Community College, York Campus, who is the President of the GSA there. We are both transgender, which effectively makes PSEC a trans-led organization. I am very proud of the PSEC community's integral work in the trans community.

CV: How does PSEC set its goals? A planning process? Who is involved in the planning process?

Stutling: The PSEC Coordinating Committee has weekly video calls and daily calls between individual leaders. We meet in person four times annually which we call Convenings. Our 21st statewide convening will take place this spring in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

In order to retain the power of the organization directly with Pennsylvania LGBTQ youth, our board of directors is appointed by the Coordinating Committee. The PSEC Board is comprised of college students and recent alumni who are in their early to mid-20s. Our board focuses on fundraising and long-term planning. The Coordinating Committee executes PSEC's work. We have a centralized staff located across the state which handles daily operations.

CV: What activities will the funds support?

Goodman: The Queer Youth Fund will revolutionize the Pennsylvania LGBTQ youth movement. As our first major grant, the Queer Youth Fund will be directly invested into the leadership development of LGBTQ youth across the Commonwealth. There are often major barriers for youth to participate in LGBTQ advocacy, especially on a statewide level. Transportation funding has consistently been our largest obstacle. Our community will specifically work toward ensuring strong leadership from trans youth, queer youth of color, rural youth, and LGBTQ youth with disabilities.

The Queer Youth Fund has allowed us to open our headquarters directly across the street from the State Capitol. We were adamant that we face the capitol. On the doorstep of the legislature, we will continue to demonstrate that LGBTQ youth are not invisible and that our lives matter.

Our new Harrisburg location will provide a safe space for LGBTQ youth advocates to become more efficient, effective, and thrive. We will continue to show the world that young LGBTQ people are resilient. We can be the leaders of today, not framed only as the leaders of tomorrow.

CV: What does PSEC want to accomplish short term? Long-term?

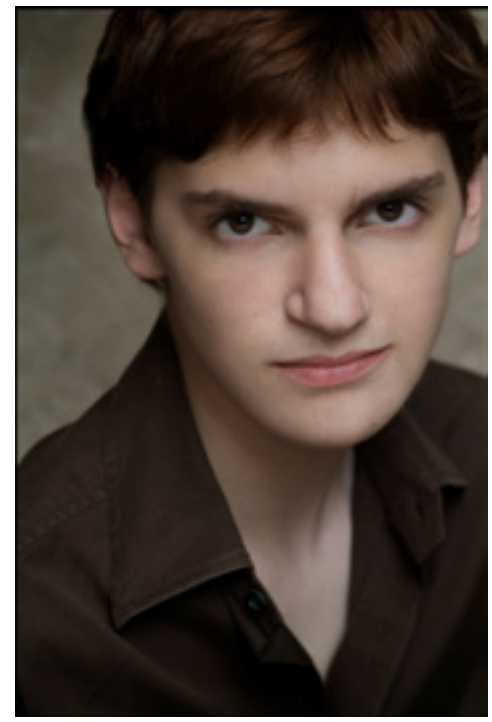
Goodman: In the short-term, we will remain our focus on community building and leadership development. As we anchor our headquarters in Harrisburg we will be increasing our visibility in state government. We will also dedicate our capacity to increasing access to our leadership pipeline for more young LGBTQ advocates across the state.

In five years we plan to have our permanent location established in Harrisburg. Over the next decade PSEC will continue to grow with more member organizations. When people think of LGBTQ youth in Pennsylvania, we want them to think of PSEC - to know there is a supportive community which they can easily access. We want to sustain our ability to be there for each other as a family of LGBTQ youth, no matter how isolated or remote we may be from each other.

CV: Add anything you think is important for readers to know.

Goodman: This year's Pennsylvania Youth Action Conference is Feb. 26 - March 1 at the Indiana University of Pennsylvania and is dedicated to "Cultivating New Possibilities for Rural LGBTQ Youth." Our keynote speaker is former State Representative Mike Fleck, of Huntingdon, who became Pennsylvania's first out gay member of the General Assembly in 2012. We invite LGBTQ youth from all throughout the state to join us in Indiana for what will be a groundbreaking and empowering event.

Web site: youthactionconference.com



Jason Landau Goodman is executive director.

Turner Stulting is a convener of PSEC's Coordinating Committee.

PSEC Field Offices

HARRISBURG
409 Walnut Street, Harrisburg, PA 17101
Phone: 717-743-1035

PITTSBURGH
210 Grant Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15219
Phone: 412-501-3999

PHILADELPHIA
1315 Spruce Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107
Phone: 215-882-9780

Programs for High School Seniors

Currently the League Foundation has 3 awards for consideration and each student application is automatically reviewed for each.

THE SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS ARE:

- **The Laurel Hester Memorial Scholarship** *(1 award annually)*
- **The Matthew Shepard Memorial Scholarship** *(1 award annually)*
- **The LEAGUE Foundation Scholarship** *(typically 5 awards annually)*

The application deadline for scholarships is April 30, 2015 and awards will be dispersed in the summer of 2015.

Questions regarding the application process can be directed to the League Foundation at info@LeagueFoundation.org or by visiting their web site at *www.leaguefoundation.org.*

Helping Others

making sense of life

By Dr. Terry Drew Karanen

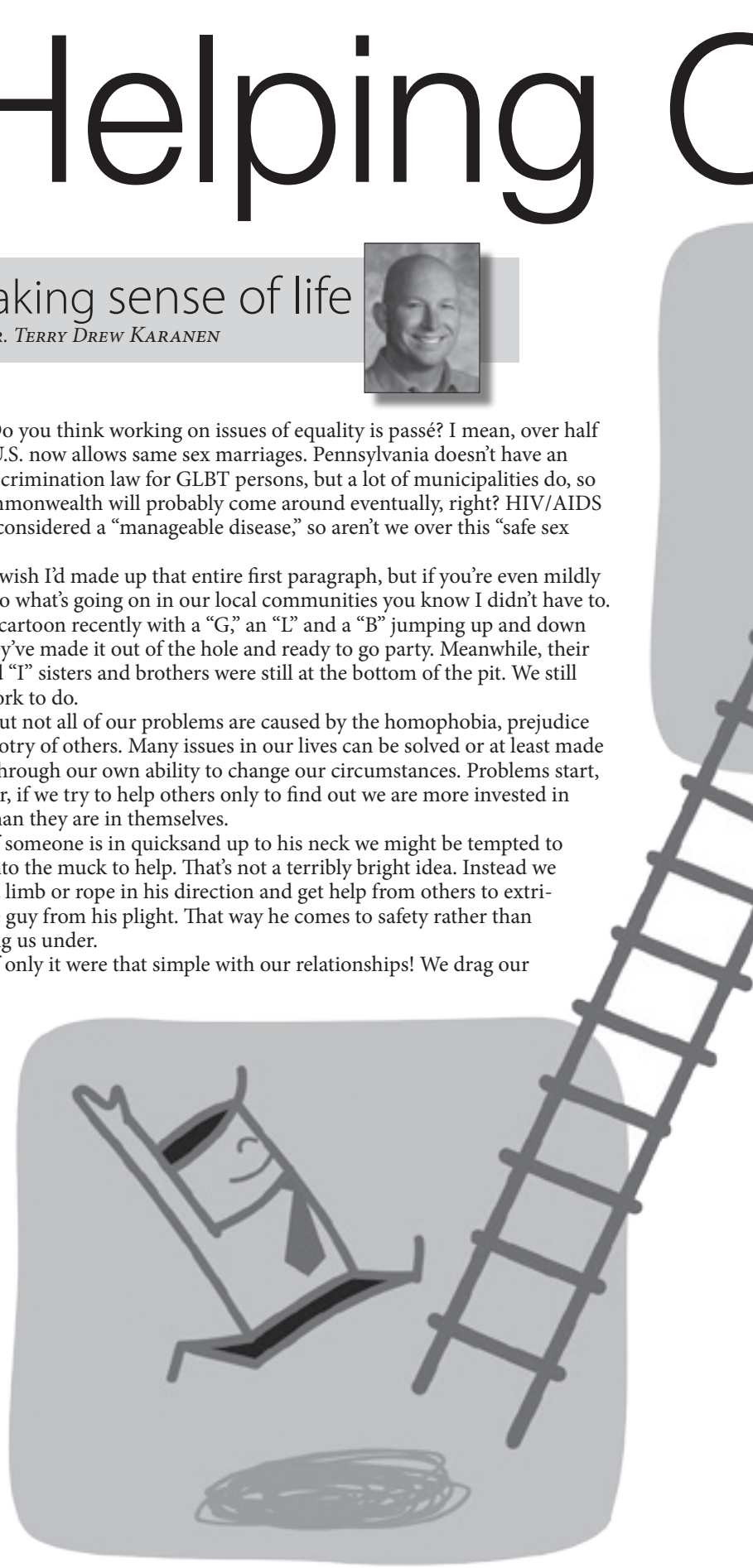
Do you think working on issues of equality is passé? I mean, over half of the U.S. now allows same sex marriages. Pennsylvania doesn't have an anti-discrimination law for GLBT persons, but a lot of municipalities do, so the commonwealth will probably come around eventually, right? HIV/AIDS is now considered a "manageable disease," so aren't we over this "safe sex stuff?"

I wish I'd made up that entire first paragraph, but if you're even mildly awake to what's going on in our local communities you know I didn't have to. I saw a cartoon recently with a "G," an "L" and a "B" jumping up and down that they've made it out of the hole and ready to go party. Meanwhile, their "T" and "I" sisters and brothers were still at the bottom of the pit. We still have work to do.

But not all of our problems are caused by the homophobia, prejudice and bigotry of others. Many issues in our lives can be solved or at least made better through our own ability to change our circumstances. Problems start, however, if we try to help others only to find out we are more invested in them than they are in themselves.

If someone is in quicksand up to his neck we might be tempted to wade into the muck to help. That's not a terribly bright idea. Instead we throw a limb or rope in his direction and get help from others to extricate the guy from his plight. That way he comes to safety rather than dragging us under.

If only it were that simple with our relationships! We drag our



spouses or partners kicking and screaming toward what we think they need. That process requires us to turn our backs on our own present and future while concentrating on someone else's problems. We'd be far better off throwing them a lifeline to grab onto and letting them make decisions independent of our dictates.

The great part about helping others fix their problems is that it often means we don't have time to look at our own messes. The "if only's" get in the way: If only she'd stop sleeping around. If only he'd quit smoking and/or drinking. If only she'd stop beating up on me. If only s/he'd stop doing A, B and C my life would be perfect. It just doesn't work that way.

We don't have the ability to change, fix or heal other people. We do have, however, the honor and privilege to stand by our friends and loved ones while they work out their own issues. They, not we, have the power within them to heal whatever it is that is stopping them from having a life worth living. But it is them, not us, who get to make the decision of whether or not to begin the process of change.

Making changes can be like changing a baby's diaper. At the risk of grossing out those of you who haven't raised kids or cared for younger siblings, consider this analogy. Now, I grant you, sometimes other indicators tell you exactly what you should expect to find once you get in there. But other times we may not have nearly the crap (pun intended)

"...we don't need to take on the grief of others at our own expense."

to deal with. And, once baby is freshened up, re-diapered and happy, we often forget about the mess.

So yes, sometimes we are there to help others deal with their crap, but the key is to remember it's their's, not ours. We are often all-too-willing to take on the problems, issues and dramas of other people. "Not my circus, not my monkeys" is a phrase I've learned to love over the past year. It's not that we don't care about others, but we don't need to take on the grief of others at our own expense. If you're anything like me you know there's plenty to deal with in our own lives.

Without getting to Biblical here, it's another case of taking the rafter out of our own eye before we start bitching about the splinter in our brother's eye. That brings us back full circle to helping others in an effective and responsible way. You are probably needed much more closely to home than you imagine. Do we rest easy in knowing we sent twenty bucks to Africa, but still turn up our noses at the homeless vet on our own corner? Are we more concerned with why government isn't doing more, instead of getting out and doing something ourselves?

Life is a journey, not a destination. We have companions along the way for years at a time and sometimes only for a split second. Make every day count in your life to do something good for someone else and yourself. Take time to look instead of criticize. Seek to understand, instead of trying to be understood. And, be willingly to help those you can, instead of wondering why no one is helping you.

Terry is a Religious Science minister, licensed social worker, author and flight attendant. Read his weekly blog at Central Voice online or on his website at: blog.terrydrewkaranen.

Cheney

Is Mary Cheney a Real Drag?

RuPaul

In late January, Mary Cheney launched a conversation on Facebook about whether drag was a valid form of entertainment, or something derogatory like blackface. Immediately, the RuPaul's Drag Race creators responded to Cheney.

The former Vice President's daughter had asked: "Why is it socially acceptable—as a form of entertainment—for men to put on dresses, make up and high heels and act out every offensive stereotype of women (bitchy, catty, dumb, slutty, etc.). But it is not socially acceptable—as a form of entertainment—for a white person to put on blackface and act out offensive stereotypes of African Americans? Shouldn't both be okay or neither? Why does society treat these activities so differently?"

Cheney said the question was inspired by an ad for the upcoming season of RuPaul's Drag Race. World of Wonder responded to Cheney's question with a video posted on YouTube. In it, RuPaul recalls the many drag pioneers who have used the art form as self-expression, as a tool of cultural and political change, and, yes, as a celebration of womanhood.

Video on youtube: A Message to Mary Cheney from RuPaul's Drag Race

Fort Lauderdale

OUT OF TOWN

By Andrew Collins

...the region has become a top getaway among LGBT travelers, many gays and lesbians of all ages

Since its rapid transformation in the early 1990s into one of the world's leading gay vacation destinations, Fort Lauderdale has continued on a steady path of exciting new developments. Swanky contemporary hotels have risen along its neatly manicured beachfront, which is within a short walk of several excellent gay resorts. The small city of Wilton Manors, which fringes Fort Lauderdale to the northwest, has become a vibrant hub of LGBT-popular nightlife, dining and shopping. And a growing number of impressive arts and historic attractions have helped turn Fort Lauderdale into one of Florida's premier arts and cultural hubs.

High season in Fort Lauderdale (sunny.org/lgbt) spans from late autumn to early spring, but Broward County is more of a year-round destination than you might think. As the region has become a top getaway among LGBT travelers, many gays and lesbians of all ages – from recent college grads to retirees – have moved here full-time. The acclaimed gay men's resort Pineapple Point is currently developing an upscale retirement complex in an up-and-coming corridor of downtown Fort Lauderdale – plans are for this flagship residence to serve as a prototype for similar communities throughout the country. And throughout the city, neighborhoods, businesses and hotels tend to draw a diverse crowd.

Fort Lauderdale also has a number of LGBT-driven events throughout the year: Pride Fort Lauderdale in late February and early March, Stonewall Pride in Wilton Manors in June, the transgender Southern Comfort Conference in late September and early October, the Fort Lauderdale Gay and Lesbian Film Festival in mid-October, Wicked Manors over Halloween, and Gay Days Fort Lauderdale week in late November.

• What to See and Do

Fort Lauderdale has several notable attractions of particular interest of gay visitors. Adjacent to the city's public library in the historic Victoria Park neighborhood, the Stonewall National Museum & Archives contains an amazing trove of artifacts and exhibits on LGBT history (the lending library and archives contain countless gay publications, from vintage erotica to community newspapers). The Stonewall Museum has a second gallery in the heart of Wilton Manors, with compelling exhibits on everything from the battle for transgender civil rights to timeline of key moments in LGBT history.

Opened in fall 2014 in Wilton Manors, the World AIDS Museum and Educational Center is both a moving tribute to those who have battled with the disease and an eye-opening, informative awareness center on HIV and AIDS. Exhibits here trace the beginnings of the disease, and how public perceptions and media coverage about it have changed over the years. Additionally, it may not sound like a conventional attraction, but the Pride Center at Equality Park in Wilton Manors is well worth visiting – it's one of the more impressive LGBT community centers in the country, and a great resource for learning about the local gay scene.

As for the region's many other appealing draws, Fort Lauderdale is one of the state's top shopping destinations. Fans of retail should definitely visit the famed Sawgrass Mills Mall, whose more than 300 designer outlets include Giorgio Armani, Barneys New York, Kate Spade, Michael Kors and Steve Madden. Or just stroll along lovely Las Olas Boulevard, which abounds with fashion boutiques and jewelry shops.

It's also a city built on and around water, and there are myriad opportunities for sightseeing cruises, fishing charters, sailing trips, scuba-diving excursions and kayak tours (many of the local accommodations work closely with area boating and sailing outfitters). Something of a hidden gem, Hugh Taylor Birch State Park is close to the beach and makes an especially nice spot for canoeing and jogging (you can also rent Segways and jet skis from M. Cruz Rentals). Also, be sure to visit the nearby Bonnet House Museum & Gardens, which comprises a grand historic estate filled with art and acres of lush gardens.

In the vibrant downtown corridor, you can catch a play or concert at the superb Broward Center for the Performing Arts. The Museum of Art Fort Lauderdale is also a great place to while away the occasional rainy afternoon. It's known for its first-rate collection of works by leading American impressionist painter William Glackens.

• Where to Eat and Play

Broward County's dining scene has evolved rapidly in recent years. For creative contemporary cuisine, check out stylish Johnny V (johnnyvlasolas.com), helmed by celeb chef Johnny Vinczencz. At this hip Las Olas Boulevard restaurant, you might try jerk-seared local black grouper or duck served three ways (foie gras, leg of confit and breast). At the trendy W Hotel, sup on choice chops and creatively prepared seafood at Steak 954 (starr-restaurant.com), part of the buzzy culinary empire of celeb chef Stephen Starr. A casual option overlook Fort Lauderdale Beach, airy Casablanca Café (casablancacafeonline.com) has a breezy patio and serves reasonably priced American and Mediterranean fare, including delish lobster rolls.

The outstanding Market 17 (market17.net) is just a short drive from the beach and serves deftly plated, farm-to-table cuisine – it's become quite celebrated for its intriguing "Dining in the Dark" option. Downtown's Tap 42 Bar & Kitchen (tap42.com) offers an outstanding craft-beer list along with well-prepared gastropub fare. For a lavish night out, look to Lobster Bar Sea Grille (buckheadrestaurants.com/lobster-bar-sea-grille), a see-and-be-seen downtown brasserie that serves superb seafood and has one of the city's best wine lists. For stellar Pan-Asian food, head to Dapur (dapurkitchen.com), a trendy gay-date spot with a lively bar area that serves colorful cocktails (the lycheetini being a favorite). Chef Edi Mulyanto turns out delicious modern cuisine with a Thai, Indonesian and Malaysian bent.

Owners of the former lesbian bar New Moon, Nancy Goodwin and Carol Moran operate one of the most enjoyable and romantic restaurants in Wilton Manors, 13 Even (13-even.com) which earns praise for its menu of reasonably priced, creative small plates, from smoked-salmon tostadas to crisp pork belly tossed with feta

Continued on page 19

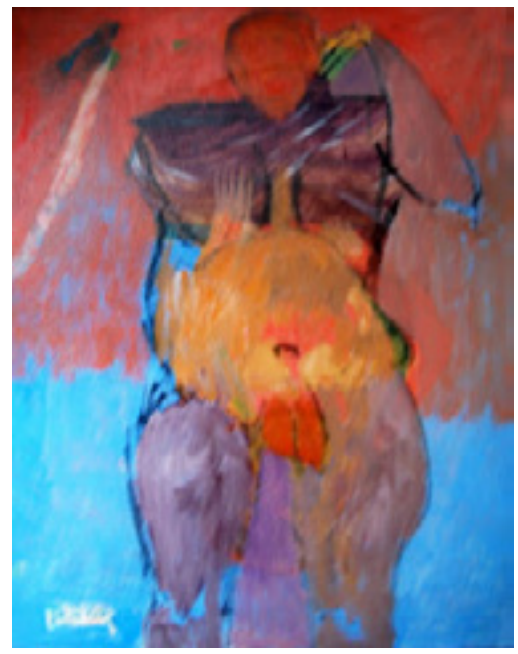
Local Great Expressionist Li Hidley to be Honored

By Carrie Wissler-Thomas

The work of the late, great expressionist painter Li Hidley will be honored until March 26 at the Art Association of Harrisburg.

Charles "Li" Hidley moved to Harrisburg from New York City in 1966, and began teaching painting classes at the Art Association in 1979. Until his death in 2003, Hidley was involved in the association as a board member, curator, receptionist, and teacher and mentor for many of the region's painters. He had his own following known as Hidley's People". His memorial service was in the association's main gallery. His ashes are interred in the garden.

Before he died, Hidley asked me whether the association would accept all his unsold paintings to continue to sell as an ongoing legacy from him. Since 2003, the association has netted over $30,000 from sales of Hidley's works. The exhibit will present a retrospective exhibition of many of his paintings still in our possession, many of which have never been exhibited on gallery walls.



Hidley attended classes in New York at The Art Students' League on the GI Bill after World War II, and studied with John Ferren, Byron Brown and Theodoros Stamos. Taking further advantage of the GI Bill, Hidley travelled to Mexico to study at Escuela de Pintura y Escultura de Esmerelda in Mexico City. Returning to New York, the young artist enrolled in classes at the Brooklyn Museum of Art, studying with Rufino Tamayo and Xavier Gonzalez. Tamayo, both a figurative and abstract painter known for his luscious colours, was an inspiration for Hidley's own work.

When Hidley moved to Harrisburg in 1966, he turned the art scene on its head, encouraging his students to find their own creative voice and to paint without fear. "Hidley's People" began taking prizes in all the area's exhibitions, much to the chagrin of the realist watercolorists who had been in the forefront previously.

Info: www.artassocofhbg.com; 717-236-1432

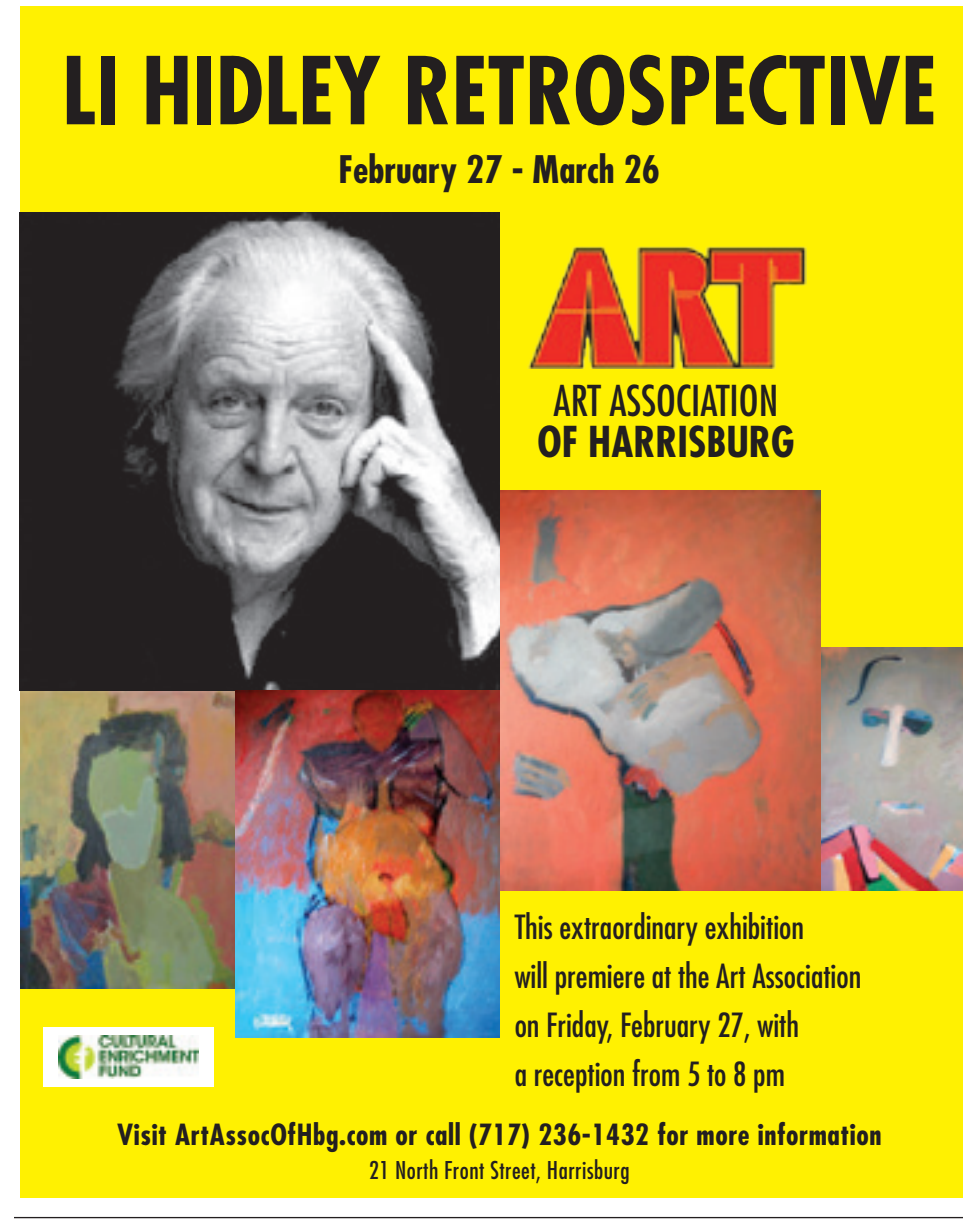
Melissa Nicholson Elected Officer of Shakespeare Theatre Association

Melissa Nicholson, executive director of Gamut Theatre Group, was unanimously elected vice president of the Shakespeare Theatre Association (STA), an international organization for theatres dedicated to the works of William Shakespeare. The nomination and election happened at the 25th annual conference held recently in San Francisco. After a two year term, Nicholson will become STA President.

The Shakespeare Theatre Association is comprised of over 100 theaters from around the world.

Nicholson is the co-founder of Harrisburg's Gamut Theatre Group. She and her husband, Artistic Director Clark Nicholson, began the company in 1993 with the Popcorn Hat Players Children's Theatre. In 1994 they built on their Popcorn Hat success by forming the Harrisburg Shakespeare Company which continues today with the annual Free Shakespeare in the Park event at Reservoir Park.

Since Nicholson and Clark started their company, Gamut Theatre Group has grown to serve around 30,000 people each year through its programming.


LI HIDLEY RETROSPECTIVE
February 27 - March 26
ART
ART ASSOCIATION
OF HARRISBURG
CULTURAL ENRICHMENT FUND
This extraordinary exhibition
will premiere at the Art Association
on Friday, February 27, with
a reception from 5 to 8 pm
Visit ArtAssocOfHbg.com or call (717) 236-1432 for more information
21 North Front Street, Harrisburg

Gettysburg College's
MAJESTIC
at the Jennifer and David LeVan Performing Arts Center
717-337-8200
GettysburgMajestic.org
25 CARLISLE STREET, GETTYSBURG, PA
AILEY II
Wednesday, March 25, 7:30 pm
Under the artistic direction of Troy Powell, this critically-acclaimed dance company presents an exhilarating and diverse repertory including Alvin Ailey's Revelationsas the finale.
$39, $36, $33
THE ACTING COMPANY
Presents Mark Twain's
"A CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT"
Sunday, April 19, 7:00 pm
Lancelot, Guinevere, Merlin and Mark Twain himself (as Hank) come tumbling your way in this satirical tale from America's favorite humorist.
$39, $36, $33

arts & entertainment

SHARADIN BIGLER THEATRE

Monty Python's Spamalot
April 30 - May 16

Follow the brave Sir Robin and the Knights of the Round Table in this hilarious Tony Award winning musical version of the 1975 cult classic Monty Python and the Holy Grail. This absurdist musical comedy, which won the Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Musical & Lyrics, is based loosely on the Arthur legend…very loosely. Set in medieval England and with memorable characters like the Black Knight, the terrifying but silly Knights who say Ni, and of course the Killer Rabbit of Caerbannog, this fabled musical send up is not dead yet…really, it's not dead yet! Tickets: (717) 733-7966; epacboxoffice@gmail.com

OPEN STAGE OF HARRISBURG

April 17-May 3

TALLEY'S FOLLY

At the end of World War II, Matt Friedman, a Jewish immigrant who has spent his life keeping others at a distance, returns to the small town where he first met Sally Talley. Nothing like her conservative Protestant family and neighbors, Sally is a nurse with deep misgivings about the country's future. After a lifetime of believing they'll never truly belong in the world around them, Matt has worked up the courage to ask Sally for her hand, and convince her that they do belong together. Tickets: 717-232-OPEN (6736)

HERSHEY THEATRE

April 7, 7 p.m.

Witness the sweep, poetry and grandeur of America's most celebrated novel as the Montana Repertory Theatre continues to tell America's great stories with its production of F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby adapted by Simon Levy. Watch the rise and fall of the notorious Jay Gatsby and the alluring and dangerous Daisy Buchanan presented by one of the nation's premier touring companies. Seeing The Great Gatsby live on stage renews and refreshes our understanding of this remarkable tale told by an American genius.
Tickets: 1-800-745-3000, HersheyTheatre.com

FULTON THEATRE, LANCASTER

March 10 - April 4

If you liked Young Frankenstein you will LOVE The Producers. They got the wrong play, the wrong director, the wrong cast. Where did they go right? Max Bialystock, a smarmy Broadway producer, and Leo Bloom, his mild-mannered accountant, have come up with a sure-fire scheme to make millions! First, sweet talk some little old ladies into giving them their life's savings. Then, find the script—the most notorious flop in history that will close after the first performance. Only one thing could go wrong: the show is a smash hit! Based on Mel Brooks' classic film, The Producers is a madcap romp that features scene after scene of delicious, laugh-out-loud comedy, 16 wickedly witty new songs, and some of the most gloriously outrageous dance numbers to ever grace the Fulton stage. It's the winner of the most Tony® Awards in Broadway history. It's Mel Brooks at his absolute best. It's bawdy, irreverent, funny, satirical, shocking, and naughty—all in the way that only Mel Brooks can deliver.
Tickets: 717-397-7425 or online

WHITAKER CENTER

Cinderella
April 18 - 1 p.m. & 7 p.m.
April 19 - 2 p.m.
Sunoco Performance Theater

Cinderella

The Fairy Tale of All Fairy Tales — Cinderella! A kindhearted Fairy Godmother. A pumpkin transformed into a carriage. A dazzling ball, a dashing prince, and a lost shoe looking for just the right fit! Alan Hineline's alluring retelling of the beloved fairy tale classic Cinderella is a must-see for the whole family. Set to Sergei Prokofiev silvery score. Cinderella – a dream come true for anyone who believes in the magic of happily ever after! 717-214-ARTS (2787)

STRAND CAPITAL

An Evening with David Sedaris
April 10, 7:30 p.m.

Comedian, NPR Humorist, Grammy Awards Nominee and Bestselling Author of Naked, Dress Your Family in Corduroy and Denim, and Let's Explore Diabetes with Owls, David Sedaris delights audiences with his unique take on life. With sardonic wit and incisive social critiques, David Sedaris has become one of America's pre-eminent humor writers. The great skill with which he slices through cultural euphemisms and political correctness proves that Sedaris is a master of satire and one of the most observant writers addressing the human condition today.
Info: www.mystrandcapitol.org

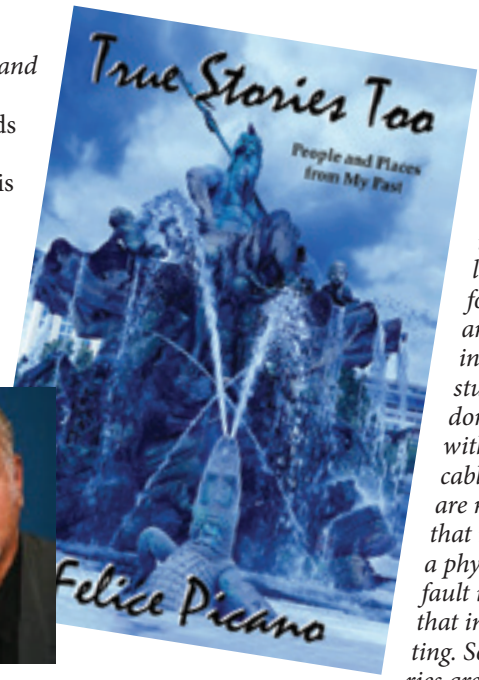
MAJESTIC, GETTYSBURG COLLEGE

Ailey II
March 25, 7:30 – 10 p.m.

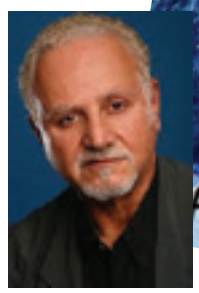
Ailey II is universally renowned for merging the spirit and energy of the most talented young dancers with the passion and creative vision of today's outstanding emerging choreographers. The company embodies Alvin Ailey's pioneering mission to establish an extended cultural community that provides dance performances, training, and community programs for all people. Under the artistic direction of Troy Powell, the Ailey spirit shines as this critically-acclaimed company presents an exhilarating and diverse repertory of timeless classics and thrilling new works. Alvin Ailey's Revelations, an American masterpiece acclaimed as a must-see for everyone, will be the stirring finale. "The dancers are sleek, athletic masters of the universe" -The New York Times - Info: 717-337-8200; boxofficeinfo@gettysburg.edu

Felice Picano's 'True Stories' Resonate Then, Now

By Frank Pizzoli



In *True Stories Too, People and Places from My Past*, award-winning author Felice Picano expands his highly praised portraits and anecdotes to reveal histories of his family, friends, and lovers. His new volume includes new tales of the many places he has lived in and visited, including New York, California, Rhode Island, Germany, and Japan.



The book follows *True Stories, Portraits from My Past,* which The New York Times called "A tremendously entertaining collection of anecdotes and portraits that only a witness (and a good writer) could report".

Central Voice: "One time, this guy handed me a picture of him, he said, 'Here's a picture of me when I was younger.' Every picture is of you when you were younger." (Comedian Mitch Hedberg) After writing about your earlier years, what appears the same, different about yourself?

Felice Picano: When I began writing memoirs in the early 80's, I was already aware that I was not the person I had been at 11 or 14 or 19 years old. As I get older, I'm coming to realize that I've had eight or nine lives already - like the cat whose name I share. The Felice Picano of the Jane Street years or the one of the Violet Quill Club era or of the Gay Presses of New York period or even the first decade living in L.A. is only partly who I am now. I cannot truly know who that person was again since I'm no longer living his life.

A friend recently sent me a video interview Vito Russo did with me in the mid 80's for his TV program then and I waited a long time before watching it out of fear that I would come off as a total jerk. But I was surprised when I watched how professional and together this younger version of me actually was. And I am sufficiently distanced to appreciate that.

CV: Speaking of distance, Aeschylus said, "Memory is the mother of all wisdom." What wisdom has your impeccable memory taught you?

Picanno: After seven decades the only wisdom I've arrived at is that life's is really hard and that I've had major advantages being born male, white, and American. Also that most people really are trying to do what is best: So I should be as kind as I can to everyone -- including myself.

CV: Gore Vidal used the word "palimpsest" to describe his memoir, meaning his memory of passages were scraped or washed off like the word's origin so they could be retold. As you have written your own memories, have you used the same technique?

Picanno: I have a lot of trouble forgetting anything. And in fact, many studies being done on people with "impeccable" memories are now showing that it is actually a physiological fault in the brain that inhibits forgetting. So my memories are definitely not scraped off. Sometimes, they are reordered and easier to live with once I've written about them. Sometimes they are less of a problem. But they never seem to vanish. Especially the AIDS years are filled with so many moments that I cannot ever get rid of. The sounds and odors of someone I deeply cared for in their last minutes alive, for example, is not something that I can ever put aside. But I try to balance all that with wonderful memories of which I have many too.

CV: Thinking of memories, you opened True Stories, Vol. 1 with "Look for a long time at what pleases you, even longer at what pains you." What pleases, what pains?

Picanno: The AIDS Crisis, of course. (Picano knew as housemates the first two gay men on the East Coast to die as the epidemic began.) Nothing else comes close by comparison. It was a period of 14 years. I'd buried a partner and, as many of us did, asked "Who's next?" and moved through life caring for and burying friends until there was no one left. But I'm basically an optimistic person. After that stretch of time I travelled to Japan, spent a year in Berlin (the subject of an essay), and then moved to the West Coast where I've been for 19 years.

CV: You were friends with Vito Russo and have been critical of how his legacy is presented, especially in his biopic "Vito". So far, our histories are about (mostly) white gay men of middle or upper class backgrounds. To be fair, these men were movers and shapers but often to the exclusion of minority men, and most women of any demographic. Martin Duberman's Hold Tight Gently is one exception. Do we have a responsibility when telling our history to mention who was excluded, and why, if we know why?

Picanno: I've always tried to include men and women of color in all of my endeavors, simply because I grew up in a multi-colored city, went to a multi-colored high school, was on multi-colored teams,

Continued on page 18

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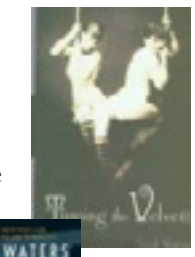
Autobiographies and Memoirs

book reviews

By Deborah Battisti & Lori Lane
Dauphin County Library System
www.dcls.org

The Welsh author, Sarah Waters, was called "One of the best storytellers alive today" by The Independent, in Britain. Her novels are immensely enjoyable, and include those highlighted below, as well as others. We have them all at the library, in print, digital and audiobook. If you love compelling characters, good writing and stories you can't put down, pick up a Sarah Walters novel soon.

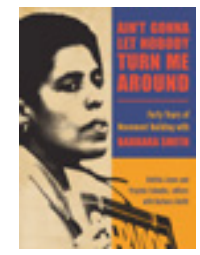
***The Paying Guests* by Sarah Waters**
In post-WWI London, 27-year-old spinster Frances Wray and her mother take in lodgers to maintain their genteel house in an upper-class neighborhood. The 'paying guests', Leonard and Lilian Barber, are at first just a disruption to the quiet household routine of the Wray women, but as Frances gets closer to Lilian and the two begin a passionate affair, everyone's world changes. An accidental murder, a harrowing trial and an unknown future plague the lovers. The Washington Post said, "Some novels are so good, so gripping or shattering that they leave you uncertain whether you should have ever started them. You open *The Paying Guests* and immediately surrender to the smooth assuredness of Sarah Waters' silken prose." The review goes on, "By the time you are finished, you find yourself emotionally sucked dry, as much stunned as exhilarated by the power of art."



Sarah Waters other novels include:
Tipping the Velvet – a saucy, sensuous and multi-layered historical romance that follows the glittering career of Nan King – oyster girl turned music-hall star turned rent boy turned East End 'tom'. Nan is captivated by the music hall phenomenon that is Kitty Butler, a male impersonator extraordinaire treading the boards in Canterbury. Through a friend at the box office, Nan manages to visit all her shows and finally meet her heroine. Soon after, she becomes Kitty's dresser and the two head for the bright lights of Leicester Square where they start an all-singing and dancing double act. At the same time, behind closed doors, they admit their attraction to each other and their affair begins.

The Night Watch - Moving back through the 1940s, through air raids, blacked out streets, illicit liaisons, sexual adventure, to end with its beginning in 1941, The Night Watch is the story of four Londoners – three women and a young man with a past, drawn with absolute truth and intimacy. More Sarah Waters' novels: ***Fingersmith, The Little Stranger, and Affinity***

New Book Reflects on Black Feminist Barbara Smith



When you hear the name Barbara Smith, you think of her role as activist in multiple social justice movements, including Civil Rights, feminism, lesbian and gay liberation, anti-racism, and Black feminism. But the range of her activism has caused contemporaries to call her a revolutionary, and *Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me Around* edited by Alethia Jones and Virginia Eubanks illustrates the various ways she has achieved this title.

Shaped from its inception by Barbara herself, this volume is the most accurate representation of her work. With information culled from nearly two hundred articles, images, and recordings from multiple archives; Barbara's personal papers; interlibrary loans; and the Internet; the editors explore everything from Smith's youth to her service as an elected official in Albany. They also include never-before-published interviews with fellow activists. What emerges is a collage of voices and experiences that illuminate the hard work that goes into pursuing social justice.

Barbara's faith in sweeping political change--the belief that massive shifts in consciousness, institutions, and power can occur at any moment--is founded in her own experience where again and again, so-called ordinary people make history. This book offers lessons from that experience that will assist others in practicing solidarity and resistance.

Barbara Smith is Public Service Professor in the School of Social Welfare at the University at Albany, State University of New York. She served two terms as a member of the City of Albany's Common Council, and is the author of *The Truth That Never Hurts: Writings on Race, Gender, and Freedom.*

Historic Harrisburg Assoc. Needs Help

On April 12, 2 p.m., Historic Harrisburg Association will present an Antiques and Artifacts Auction in partnership with Cordier Auctions with 100% of the proceeds benefitting Historic Harrisburg Association and its mission of promoting historic preservation and urban revitalization.

Donations are currently being accepted. Items sought for auction include antiques, collectibles, coins, jewelry, architectural artifacts, and vehicles. The goal is to have items that will obtain a bid of at least $50. Items already contributed include a Federal-style fireplace mantel, oak tables, beveled-glass inkwells, a chrome and green leather dentist chair, numerous artworks and items of local and regional historical interest.

Items are being received at HHA, 1230 N. Third Street for processing, and the auction will take place at the Cordier Auction House, 1500 Paxton Street, Harrisburg.

To donate items, your time, monetary gift or to just learn more, email info@historicharrisburg.com or call the HHA office at 717.233.4646.

Picano's Stories *Continued from page 17*

an African-American girl in 1960 (!) and continued to have a wide variety of friends throughout my life. So it's more or less natural for me.

This also was true during early Gay Lib years. Isaac Jackson had a program on the New York City official radio station geared toward the Black Community, and for several years in a row after Stonewall, he would have me and others on the program the night before the Pride March and we would urge people of color to show up. For many years none ever did.

Writer friends of color have told me since that there was a huge disconnect in those years between being black and being gay. That's a valid explanation. I and the Ferro-Grumleys were part of Black and White Men together at the NYC Gay and Lesbian Center, and out of that grew the Black Heart Collective of writers like Donald Woods, Essex Hemphill (subject of Duberman's book, along with Michael Callen), Assotto Saint, etc. etc. most of them long dead and very much missed. Despite all that, early Gay Liberation in America actually was a 98 percent white, male, college educated, and middle class movement.

CV: Your collection opens and closes with a family story. Has your family been your anchor all these years? In person and memory?

Picanno: By no means. My family has seldom been any kind of a support and has always been a terrific drain on me, emotionally, financially, and in every way you can imagine. I finally escaped their more hideous dysfunction early, at the age of 16, and have lived away from them ever since. I have many Jewish friends, and my partner was Jewish, and they were/are always horrified to hear that despite my high educational achievements my parents refused to allow me to go to college. So I left home and I put myself through college and never looked back and have had as little as I could in dealing with them.

CV: Have the many characters you've chronicled have been your family?

Picanno: It is the job of a writer to convey a world that is gone. There are so many different types of people, some well known, and some not known at all. All are good subjects. And all the people who have been around us define who we are. I find them fascinating. I'm dull.

Lancaster Events

Zenkaikon - March 27 - 29
Lancaster County Convention Center
www.zenkaikon.com/registration, 866-503-3786
Since 2006, Zenkaikon has been holding an annual celebration of anime, comics, games, science fiction, and fandom. Zenkaikon is excited to announce Richard Horvitz and Rikki Simons as guests for 2015. Fans of animation will recognize Richard Horvitz as the voice of many iconic characters. Rikki Simons is a voice actor, writer, and artist. He is most famous for being the voice of the robot in a dog suit, GIR from Invader ZIM.

York Events

Annual Juried Student Exhibition - March 17- April 1
York College of Pennsylvania
717-815-1562
The Annual Juried Student Exhibition features selected work from students taking courses in Fine Art and Graphic Design at York College. Students submit their work for consideration and guest jurors select works that are exceptional, represent our program, and exhibit well together.

Fort Lauderdale *Continued from page 14*

and watermelon. On the same block, Mind Your Manors is a convivial spot for filling and tasty pub fare. The neighborhood is also home to Rosie's (rosiesbng.com), a dishy and very social spot for casual pub fare, including huge burgers, sandwiches, coconut-shrimp platters, and more.

The Naked Grape (nakedgrapewinebar.com) is a handsome little wine bar with light food and a well-curated selection of vino from all over the world.

Fort Lauderdale pulses with gay bars, with the lion's share of them in Wilton Manors. The handsome two-level Manor (themanorcomplex.com) complex can be a fine place to kick off the evening or dance into the wee hours. This snazzy space has a nightclub aglow with crystal chandeliers plus myriad bars and a kitchen serving inventive tapas. B. Bar & Grille (billsfillingstation.com), formerly Bill's Filling Station, is popular especially among the 35-and-older crowd. There's food, excellent cabaret and saucy drag shows, and four different bars. Another good bet for piano cabaret is Tropics (tropicsofwiltonmanors.com), which offers above-average dinner fare too.

Sidelines Sports Bar (sidelinessports.com) draws a great mix of folks to shoot pool and watch sports on TV, the Village Pub (villagepubwm.com) has a nice little dance floor, a good-size patio, and a stage with drag shows; and the hip and stylish Progress Bar (progressbarsouthflorida.com) is a friendly neighborhood spot with great dancing on weekends and a strong following among both men and women. Hunters (huntersftlauderdale.com), Rumors, and the Alibi are slick, happening video and dance bars nearby, all three of them good places to meet locals and converse with friends. And leather bars like the dungeonesque Ramrod (ramrodbar.com), with its Tom of Finland artwork, and Cubby Hole (thecubbyhole.com), always draw dedicated crowds of butch guys. At just about any of the bars, themes changes nightly - from karaoke to country-western dancing to drag bingo.

• Where to Stay

Many of the top gay resorts in Fort Lauderdale are just two or three blocks in from the beachfront (and the popular gay beach at Sebastian Street and A1A). One of the classiest and most relaxing options, the Grand Resort (grandresort.net) stands out for its warm and professional service and thoughtful amenities, which include a first-rate day spa (open both to non-guests and those staying on property) offering a wide range of massage and body treatments. There's also a gym, a large pool with a swimsuits-required policy, a more secluded courtyard and sunning area with a hot tub that's clothing-optional, a nice gym, and some of the largest suites of any gay resort in town. Some of the 33 units have full contemporary kitchens, separate living rooms and private outdoor showers.

With its dapper Mid-Century Modern design, the Royal Palms Resort & Spa (royalpalms.com) exudes sexiness. The thoughtfully maintained resort has an "all-welcome" policy but caters heavily to the LGBT market. There are 66 rooms with a sleek and unfussy aesthetic and such cushy perks as iHome docks and rain-forest-style glass showers, close proximity to the beach, a scene-y bar and grill, and a luxe spa, and a well-designed fitness center with yoga classes available. Another good bet is the sister property, the Lush Royale (lushroyalefortlauderdale.com), formed when two neighboring resorts (the former Royal Palms and Orton Terrace) combined. The 28 upscale units here are eclectic and attractive, ranging from compact Junior Queens with small kitchenettes to Superior Royal Suites with king beds, huge living-dining areas and full modern kitchens. There are two pools and ample, clothing-optional sunning areas. The same owners also operate the nearby Grand Palm Plaza (grandpalmplaza.com) and Elysium Resort (elysiumresort.net).

Another good bet in the neighborhood is the complex comprising three neighboring, mid-priced gay resorts: the Worthington (theworthington.com), Alcazar Resort (alcazarresort.com) and Villa Venice (villavenice.com). Together, these centrally located, clothing-optional hideaways rank among the cruisiest resorts in South Florida, with playful vibes, energetic fun-in-the-sun patrons, and attractive grounds for sunning and swimming au naturale.

For pure luxury, it's hard to beat Pineapple Point (pineapplepoint.com), a handsome 1930s spread that has the grace and style of a Caribbean plantation, and quite possibly the cushiest suites of any gay resort in the country. With top-notch service and gorgeous grounds spread across two tropically landscaped acres, this compound is slightly inland, in the desirable Victoria Park neighborhood, and offers standard rooms, cozy cottages and fabulous villas – the latter with rooftop decks, big kitchens and other perks.

One of the closest resorts to the many gay bars and restaurants in Wilton Manors, Cabanas Guest House (thecabanasguesthouse.com) appeals to social butterflies (note the10-man Jacuzzi and eight-man aromatherapy steam room). The posh rooms have goose-down comforters, DVD players and CD/MP3 players. There's also a full-service day spa. Also in the heart of Wilton Manors, the Calypso Inn (calypsoinnwiltonmanors.com) is a fun little B&B with four charming, reasonably priced rooms.

Fort Lauderdale also has some terrific, gay-welcoming mainstream resorts. The chic W Fort Lauderdale (wfortlauderdalehotel.com) cuts a dashing profile along the Route A1A beachfront, its sybaritic Bliss Spa offering deluxe treatments, and its large pool hosting fab parties all weekend; rooms are decked out with state-of-the-art media centers and supremely comfy beds. The nearby Atlantic Hotel & Spa (atlantichotelfl.com) offers unobstructed ocean views from the majority of its spacious, airy rooms, all of them with Bose CD-stereos, lovely patios and small kitchens. Other mainstream properties along the beachfront with fine views and attractive rooms include the Westin Fort Lauderdale Beach Resort (westinftlauderdalebeach.com), the Courtyard Fort Lauderdale Beach (marriott.com), the Hilton Fort Lauderdale Beach (hilton.com) and the Ritz-Carlton Fort Lauderdale (ritzcarlton.com).

Andrew Collins produces the site GayTravel.About.com and contributes to many other travel magazines and websites.

Raising a Trans Child

Continued from page 1

example, represent a binary is a timely topic. Binary means either or, as in either male or female. In early February, Lancaster County's Lampeter-Strasburg school officials ran into difficulty when a guidance counselor read *Jacob's New Dress* to a kindergarten class. The teacher had sent a note home to parents after the book was read to the class. That decision drew criticism from parents and a local pastor.

Prevention of problems through education and understanding is what Leen advises. She notes that falling outside that either/or construct is not a form of mental illness although ridiculing or bullying a child for being different can lead to mental health problems.

Recent research published in the Journal of Adolescent Health indicates non-acceptance of a child's non-binary nature can lead to mental health problems. The study compares the mental health of transgender youth treated at a community health center with that of their non-transgender peers. Not surprising, it finds that transgender youth face much higher negative mental health outcomes.

Researchers looked at electronic health records of 180 transgender patients age 12-29 years matched with non-transgender patients who were seen for healthcare at the center. Compared with non-transgender youth, transgender youth had a higher probability of being diagnosed with depression (50.6% vs. 20.6%); suffering from anxiety (26.7% vs. 10%); attempting suicide (17.2% vs. 6.1%); and engaging in self-harming activities without lethal intent (16.7% vs. 4.4%).

Are these higher measures of mental health problems the result of non-acceptance and/or hostile environments?

Non-acceptance and/or hostile environments are certainly antecedents for depression and anxiety among transgender and gender non-conforming youth," Leen explains, adding that society still struggles with understanding and acceptance of gender non-conformity. She says that some individuals report significant depression and anxiety due to one's gender identity not matching their physical appearance. "Being mis-gendered by others is a constant reminder that your physical appearance and identity may not be translating into society's standards of a binary world and for some this leads to feelings of anxiety and/or depression."

How early do transgender children show signs of gender identity?

Leen says many individuals state they have known since they were very young or as long as they can remember their gender did not conform to their sex. "It is not uncommon for children as young as three-years-old to start showing signs of gender dysphoria and discomfort with gender norms," she points out.

If a child shows signs of a fluid gender identity, what can a parent do to be supportive?

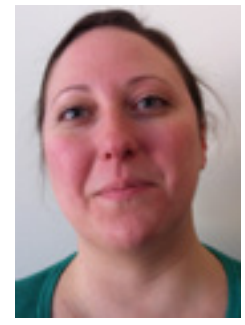
"Parents play a powerful role in a child's life and supporting your child to be themselves has been proven to have significant positive outcome in a child's mental health and self-esteem," Leen says. "Be patient with your child, just because they are showing gender non-conforming behaviors doesn't necessary mean they are transgender." She advises parents to allow children to explore their feelings in the safety of their own home without fear of ridicule or bullying.

"Engage in supportive parenting practices with your child. Creating a supportive family environment and require respect within the family for your child. Express love and support for your child and allow a zero tolerance policy for disrespect and negative comments." Leen says. "Maintain an open and honest line of communication with your child."

When should supportive counseling begin? For the child? For one or both parents?

Falling outside of the gender binary isn't a mental illness that needs treatment, Leen stresses. "Unfortunately our world does not quite understand gender diversity yet and this can lead to feelings of anxiety and/or depression." Therapy can help gender non-conforming children process the feelings, concerns that come along with falling outside of the gender binary.

> **"[This] may not be one we choose for our children but it's our responsibility to navigate it."**



Elizabeth Leen, LMSW, is Behavioral Health Administrator and Therapist at Alder Health Services

Parents often have a variety of responses to their child coming out. "There is no right or wrong response and there maybe feelings of embarrassment, anger, fear, doubt, grief, denial, worry, acceptance, understanding, pride and joy," Leen says. This is a difficult road to navigate for parents "and may not be one we choose for our children but it's our responsibility to navigate it. No parent is alone in these feelings or experiences and it may be helpful to see support from other parents or a mental health provider."

When finding a therapist it's important to find a professional who will meet your needs. "By no means are all therapists well informed on issues of gender as they relate to children and youth," Leen advises. She says when seeking a professional, ask about their experience with transgender individuals or gender non-conforming individuals. "An uneducated therapist can do more harm than good," Leen says.

When does medical help with transitioning begin?

Identifying as gender non-conforming does not necessarily mean an individual will completely transition. "Some may choose not to make changes to their bodies while others may feel the need to change in order to feel complete," Leen explains.

Some families may begin puberty blockers for a child during adolescence to stop the puberty process until they are ready to begin Hormone Replacement Therapies. "Once a family and physician feel an individual is ready they may begin receiving Hormone Replacement Therapies," Leen says.

In the end, it's important to find a medical provider who understands gender and children.

"Don't be afraid to ask what their experience is with working with gender non-conforming or transgender children. Ask other's about their experience in finding a provider to manage their child's care. Even if your child will not be making physical changes it is still important to have an affirming provider," Leen concludes.

Contact: liz@alderhealth.org or 233-7190, ext. 248

College Ends 'Vagina Monologues' in Support of Transgender Students

Presented annually since the 1990s, Mount Holyoke College ended production of Eve Ensler's The Vagina Monologues in support of transgender students. The play covers aspects of the feminine lifestyle including sex, love, rape, menstruation, birth, orgasm and the vagina.

The college, whose founder Mary Lyon once challenge the women who would follow her: "Go forward, attempt great things, accomplish great things," ended the tradition over concerns that the play is "not inclusive enough."

In an email sent school-wide, Erin Murphy, a student at Mount Holyoke, explained that, "At its core, the show offers an extremely narrow perspective on what it means to be a woman.

Others disagree.

"Had the Mt. Holyoke drama students done their homework, they would have discovered that neither Eve Ensler nor The Vagina Monologues is transphobic," she replied to *Central Voice* in an email.

She would know.

"I had the honor of being directed by Ms. Ensler in the first all-trans cast production of the play in 2004, a production which included a monologue she wrote specifically for trans women," Beyer explained, adding "I believe I can speak for many of my acting colleagues and expand on that by saying that the entire play touched us all very deeply."

On February 21, 2004 Miss Ensler in conjunction with Jane Fonda and Deep Stealth Productions produced and directed the first all-transgender performance of the play, with readings by 18 notable transgender women and including a new monologue documenting the experiences of transgender women. It debuted in connection with LA V-DAY Until the Violence Stops with monologues documenting the violence against transgender women. Since that debut, many university and college productions have included these three "Transgender Monologues". Beautiful Daughters (2006) is a documentary about the cast of the first performance by transgender women.

Holyoke student Murphy also said, "Gender is a wide and varied experience, one that cannot one that cannot simply be reduced to biological or anatomical distinctions, and many of us who have participated in the show have grown increasingly uncomfortable presenting material that is inherently reductionist and exclusive."

According to the NY Daily News, the Holyoke performers told a Facebook group page that they have decided to create their own original play called "The Student Body" which will focus on sex and gender. The group also criticized Ensler's play, claiming that it "fails the trans community in a lot of ways." This decision may be related to the college's major change in admission policy in September 2014. The college decided to not only allow cisgender females ("cis" refers to those whose gender identity matches their body), but others who identify as women as well.

"We recognize that what it means to be a woman is not static," said Lynn Pasquerella, the school's president. "Just as early feminists argued that reducing women to their biological functions was a foundation of women's oppression, we acknowledge that gender identity is not reducible to the body. And we are mindful that exclusion from the category of 'woman' based on properties of birth is nothing new."

Joanne M. Carroll, TransCentral PA president and *Central Voice* columnist, says, "The Vagina Monologues are great if you have never witnessed prior performances. The first one you see sort of becomes the standard by which all are judged."

Carroll thinks it would be acceptable to continue offering The Vagina Monologues and produce The Student Body, explaining how each addresses the unique needs of its characters. She doesn't find the Monologues offensive. "The show has a timeless message; it provides all women with power over rather than power under our circumstances," she says, adding "Some may not wish to see the original play repeatedly; thus The Student Body perhaps becomes an alternative.

Immediate past president of TranscentralPA, Jeanine Ruhsam, tells Central Voice that while she appreciates "the progressive, inclusive attitude of the students, I feel that the Vagina Monologues continue to hold a relevant and important place in feminist and women's culture." As a transgender woman she does not feel slighted or discriminated against when seeing or participating in the play and its frank, often funny embracing of female genitalia.

Ruhsam explains that the One Billion Rising movement of which the play is a part is about empowering women who have been terribly abused and oppressed by patriarchy. "That it focuses on bodies and body parts is just the point- women have been dominated by men because of their bodies, and female genital mutilation, practiced here in America as late as the end of the 19th century, continues regularly across the world today as a method of subjugation. Here in America today our elected male politicians are still deciding the fate of women's bodies."

Dana Beyer, far left, Cal, Eve Ensler, Jane Fonda, Rene, and Roxanne in a 2004 trans-friendly production of The Vagina Monlogues produced by play author Ensler and Fonda.

transgender column

By Joanne Carroll
president of TransCentralPA

The Seventh Annual Keystone Conference will commence on March 18-22 at the Sheraton Harrisburg-Hershey. With a theme of is "A Celebration of Gender Diversity", the Keystone Conference is hosted annually by TransCentralPA in Pennsylvania's capital city of Harrisburg.

As the keystone bridges and holds together associated entities, Trans-identifying people do the same, and the Keystone Conference is a celebration of the unique diversity of gender and our central and unifying place in society.

Pennsylvania is known as the Keystone State because of its significance in unifying the early colonies, and it is quite relevant that we hold this conference here in the state's capital, ideally located within an easy drive from six major east coast cities.

This conference allows members, allies, supporters, spouses, service providers and friends of the Transgender Community to come together for an informative, inspirational and joyous experience. Here, friendships are forged and renewed in a safe place.

The city of Harrisburg has proven to be a welcoming and friendly place, and has provided conferees the perfect environment to experience life in the open. Several events allow convention attendees to dine and dance in a number of well-known eateries in downtown Harrisburg.

The event features nationally known persons as speakers or seminar presenters from within the transgender community and beyond.

Continuing education units are available to licensed social workers [LCW is an actual rating], professional counselors and marriage therapists. Bryn Mawr College Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research provides certification.

The conference began small and was originally intended as an educational opportunity for the trans-identifying residents of Southeastern Pennsylvania. When its existence became known, the reach has expanded beyond anything TransCentralPA could have envisioned.

For the past six years, growth has been exponential and the Keystone Conference is easily the second largest, if not the largest conference of its kind in all of North America and the world.

The annual attendance has grown to over 500 attendees with an estimated economic impact of over one-quarter million dollars to the economy of Harrisburg and South Central Pennsylvania.

The majority of conferees come from each of the Northeastern States and Eastern Canada. Nearly every one of the 50 states and 7 provinces are represented, and in the past several years, the conference has become international in scope, with registered attendees from Israel, Belgium, Spain, England, Ireland, South Africa, Australia and several South American countries.

This year with an expanded capacity web presence, inquiries have come from nearly 5,000 people and from over 60 countries. With this level of interest, the Keystone Conference promises to grow once again.

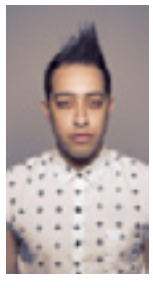
TransCentralPA is a federally recognized 501c3 Non-profit organization dedicated to serving the transgender community in and around Central Pennsylvania.

Membership is open to all transgender individuals, their Significant Others and to other persons who have a personal or professional interest in a transgender person or in gender behavior or theory in general. Those under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian (proof is required under Pennsylvania Law). Monthly meetings are open to everyone. For more information, visit www.TransCentralPA.org.

Joanne Carroll is the President of TransCentral PA. TransCentral PA is committed to providing advocacy and caring support for transgender individuals, their significant others, families, friends and allies. TransCentralPA also provides gender education and information to businesses, organizations, educational institutions and governmental agencies.

Will Christians Decry Anti-gay Laws?

By Eliel Cruz



Editor's Note: Last issue (Jan.-Febg. 2015), we wrote about the role of religion in provoking hatred and violence against LGBT people. This month, Eliel Cruz, a contributor at The Advocate and Religion News Service, focuses on the role of American Evangelical groups.

Why aren't Christians decrying the criminalization of homosexuality?

American Evangelical groups have been tied to the evangelization of religious homophobia. There are clear links of the importation of conservative theology regarding same-sex relationships that have led to the criminalization of LGBT individuals around the world. Perhaps most notably was in 2009 during the height Uganda's "Kill The Gays Bill" media attention in which Christian groups were accused of supporting the bill. The bill, which has since passed, criminalizes homosexuality with penalties up to 14 years in prison.

Christian leaders like Russell Moore, President of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC), decried the law. He claimed he didn't know a single evangelical who supported laws like the one in Uganda. And while that may be true, Christians don't have to explicitly advocate for the killing of LGBT individuals if their theology does it for them.

Documentary God Loves Uganda details Evangelical Christian's influence behind Uganda's anti-LGBT law, specifically the efforts of the International House of Prayer (IHOP). Yet, the influence is certainly not limited to IHOP as other Christian speakers and groups have been linked to the law as well. But while other Christian groups may not have paper trails directly connecting them with the law, the theological message being shared that encourages these draconian laws are the same across non-affirming Christianity.

Indeed, the theology that dehumanizes LGBT people is the same. Verbiage that is exclusively used by non-affirming Christians (i.e. "homosexual lifestyle" "Same-sex attracted" "homosexual behavior") is passed on and the same marginalization of LGBT people continues. Except this time policy makers are taking that non affirming theology to the letter of the law and justifying the imprisonment, torture, and killing of LGBT individuals.

Just last month Gambia quietly passed a law with severe penalties for what they call "aggravated homosexuality." According to the Human Rights Watch: three women, four men, and a 17-year-old boy were arrested so far and have been subjected to torture to illicit a confession of their presumed sexualities and to name other possible offenders. "The detainees said that they were told that if they did not "confess," including by providing the names of others, a device would be forced into their anus or vagina to "test" their sexual orientation." It's shocking to read these inhumane injustices. It's even more shocking that Christianity has not only remained complacent in these injustices but have also directly influenced them.

Media Matters published a report on Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) and their influence in anti-LGBT laws domestically and internationally. ADF has worked to enforce and create "anti-sodomy" laws which criminalizes consensual intimacy between same-sex partners. It's not just sexual intimacy that's being outlawed. The law is used to imprison people who are perceived to be LGBT. As the Human Rights Watch reported regarding the new law in Gambia, the definition of homosexuality is purposefully vague and is used completely arbitrarily.

"In 2003, ADF president Alan Sears co-wrote a book titled 'The Homosexual Agenda: Exposing The Principal Threat to Religious Freedom Today', which warned that eliminating anti-sodomy laws would lead to the overturning of 'laws against pedophilia, sex between close relatives, polygamy, bestiality and all other distortions and violations of God's plan,'" reports Media Matters.

These same individuals who actively enforce criminalization of LGBT individuals were invited to speak at the recent ERLC conference on Homosexuality. How does the Southern Baptist Church reconcile their promotion of an organization that works to enact laws that have ended in the deaths of thousands? The evidence of this theology being used to criminalize homosexuality is available yet Christian's choose to ignore it or simply wash their hands of responsibility like Pilate.

If a theological message is being used to criminalize a person's existence, what does that say about the theology? And why aren't Christian's actively and vocally denouncing it? It's hard to believe that denominations like the SBC affirm LGBT people's humanity while promoting the illegalization of our existence in the next breath.

My own denomination, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, had a large anti-gay conference this past spring. It was held in South Africa where "corrective rape" (a disgusting act in which individuals rape lesbian women or trans men to "correct" their sexuality or gender identity), is serious problem. There are dozens of large Christian groups whose evangelizing directly contributes to the homophobic climate that leads to the implementation of these laws. What will it take for Christian's to affirm LGBT people's humanity and denounce the illegalization of our existence?

Our theology is killing people. Right now, people are dying because of it. Christians everywhere, regardless of theological stances on same-sex relationships, need to vocally and actively denounce the criminalization of LGBT people. If we stand idly by without condemning these laws that outlaw LGBT people, we might as well have written them ourselves.

Funeral Stopped Upon Discovery Deceased Was Lesbian

"New Hope Ministries in Lakewood, Colorado is a place where those bound by drugs, alcohol, gangs, and violence can find an 'Ounce of Hope,'" says Pastor Ray Chavez's church website. Apparently an ounce of hope and a $400 payment isn't enough to ensure that a scheduled funeral will actually occur — even if mourners have already arrived.

The late Vanessa Collier

Vanessa Collier died late December. Her friends, wife, and family gathered to mourn her loss at New Hope Ministries. After an open-casket visitation, friends and family sat down to wait for Pastor Chavez to begin the sermon.

Five minutes passed. Nothing happened. Ten minutes passed. Still nothing. Fifteen minutes after the funeral was supposed to begin, Chavez announced that it would have to be moved due to "technical difficulties," says Vanessa's friend Jose Silva, a dean at Catalyst High School and a spokesperson for the family.

"Is this a joke?" Silva thought. "Is this true?" What sort of 'technical difficulty' could prevent a pastor from officiating the funeral of a person whose body was lying right in front of him?

"Chavez asked for the pall bearers to have the body moved," Silva says. "That's when we knew it was real. The family handled it with grace, but you can sense the horror they felt."

"The entire funeral, casket and all, were moved," wrote Vanessa's friend Yvonne Maes on Facebook. "As it turns out, the reason for moving the funeral was because the minister didn't support gay marriage and refused to continue with the service. Vanessa's wife, two children, family, and friends were devastated."

Silva attended New Hope Ministries as a teenager. He, his friends, and his family left the church because of the bigotry of Chavez's teachings.

Chavez was unavailable for comment.

Out Front spoke with an employee at New Hope Ministries who declined to give her name. She said, however, that she was in charge of funerals. "We left the premises to [the family], and they are the ones who chose to leave," she said.

She said she did not know if anybody at the church had spoken to the family about Vanessa's sexual orientation or marriage. Nobody at New Hope Ministries could comment on the funeral because, "We had nothing to do with it," the representative said.

When asked about her contradicting narratives — that the church had nothing to do with the funeral and that the family chose to leave — she hung up the phone.

New Hope Ministries

The conflict started when Chavez ordered an associate minister to tell the family to remove a video from the ceremony, Silva says. The video celebrated Vanessa and her wife's relationship, documenting their engagement. Chavez refused to show the video because it acknowledged Silva's marriage to a woman and her "alternative lifestyle," as he told the family.

"He had the associate pastor tell the family," Silva says. "He didn't come talk to family — he had somebody else do it. He hid behind his religious veil, which is a shame."

The church had approved of the video ahead of time, but Pastor Chavez pulled it, Maes says.

"He said, 'You can take your funeral elsewhere.' He still hasn't returned the community's money," which was $400 in total, according to Silva. "They had to experience her death once and the trauma of that loss a second time with their daughter, wife, and mother of children not being recognized as a human being in God's hall, in the sanctuary of the Lord, where we're all considered God's children."

While antidiscrimination laws do not apply to religious organizations, New Hope Ministries is connected to a charter school that accepts public money. Antidiscrimination law should trump Chavez's personal beliefs, Silva says. "It would be different if he ran a church without public funding. Because he receives funding for the charter school, his ideas go out the window."

Silva and others are considering taking New Hope Ministries to court to retrieve the money that the church has not returned to the family. Vanessa's community is also considering pursuing anti-discrimination charges. Organizers plan to pressure Douglas County to revoke New Hope Ministries' K-12 school's charter.

"As a tax payer, I don't pay taxes for you to go in and treat people like that," Silva says.

On January 13, approximately 100 friends, family, and community members gathered in front of New Hope Ministries to protest Chavez's decision.

Silva led chants including: "What would Jesus do?" and "We want an apology."

Protestors raised their hands in prayer. Silva asked God to forgive Chavez.

"There was no dignity in death," Silva says. "This is about is creating dignity in death."

LGBT community center coalition

By Louie Marven, Executive Director and Gil Brown, President & CEO, Hospice of Central PA

Hospice of Central PA and Center Partner on End of Life Planning

This Spring, Aging with Pride programming will include a four-week series on end of life planning. The series, presented in partnership with Hospice of Central PA, will include topics like dispelling hospice myths, self-care for caregivers, and preparing the family for the death of a loved one.

Hospice of Central PA staff participated in the Aging with Pride lunchtime discussion group to assess needs and interests on end of life planning concerns, and customized this series of topics based on the discussion with attendees.

From a service provider's perspective, Hospice of Central PA sees the confusion and stress experienced by individuals and families when a serious illness happens and there has been no advance discussion and documentation about end of life care issues. An important part of its work is to help individuals and families engage in these conversations and hopefully be better prepared if a serious illness happens.

The series will kick off during the regular 4th Thursday Aging with Pride program on March 26, and will continue on the next three Thursdays, April 2, 9, and 16. Each session will take place at The LGBT Center from 6-8 pm. This series of four sessions will have the following focal points:

End of Life Planning: This session will cover Physician Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment (POLST), Living Wills, Advance Directives, Healthcare Surrogacy and HIPAA Waivers. A local legal expert will be a part of the panel and will address issues specific to the LGBT community.

Dispelling Hospice Myths: Much of the general public, as well as professionals in the medical community, hold incorrect perceptions of hospice care, i.e., that it is for cancer patients only or that hospice is appropriate only for the days immediately preceding death. These and other "myths" related to hospice care will be discussed and clarified.

Self-Care for Caregivers: More and more community members are finding themselves in the role of caregiver. Research in this area is clear that the caregiving role can have a profoundly negative effect on the health and well-being of caregivers. This session will present useful education and self-care techniques as well as identifying caregiver support groups in the area.

Preparing the Family for the Death of a Loved One: While the death of a loved one is always difficult and painful, it can be made less frightening by knowing what to expect. Many family members are comforted by knowing that what they are observing is the natural process as a life ends. This session will review how families can effectively prepare for the loss of a loved one.

Register at bit.ly/AgingWithPride for this free program. RSVP is recommended and appreciated to help with planning, but not required.

Aging with Pride programming includes regular 2nd Thursday brown-bag lunch discussion group (12-2 pm) and 4th Thursday educational and cultural programming (6-8 pm) at The Center. Other upcoming topics include social media training (Feb. 26), screening and discussion of the film *Pay It No Mind* about Stonewall activist Marsha P. Johnson (Apr. 23), and AARP's fight to support caregivers (May 28).

The mission of the LGBT Center of Central PA is to create common ground for the LGBT community and allies in central Pennsylvania by providing services through educational, cultural, and community activities that foster wholeness.

A six-part dialogue on end of life planning called the Closure Initiative was origianlly developed by the Jewish Healthcare Foundation in Pittsburgh. The LGBT Community Center of Central PA presented a four-part, LGBT-focused program. Pictured rom the left: Dorothy Fulton, representing the LGBT Community Center; Cory Messigner, Hetrick-Bitner, Geigle & Smith funeral services; and John Folby, representing the LGBT Community Center.

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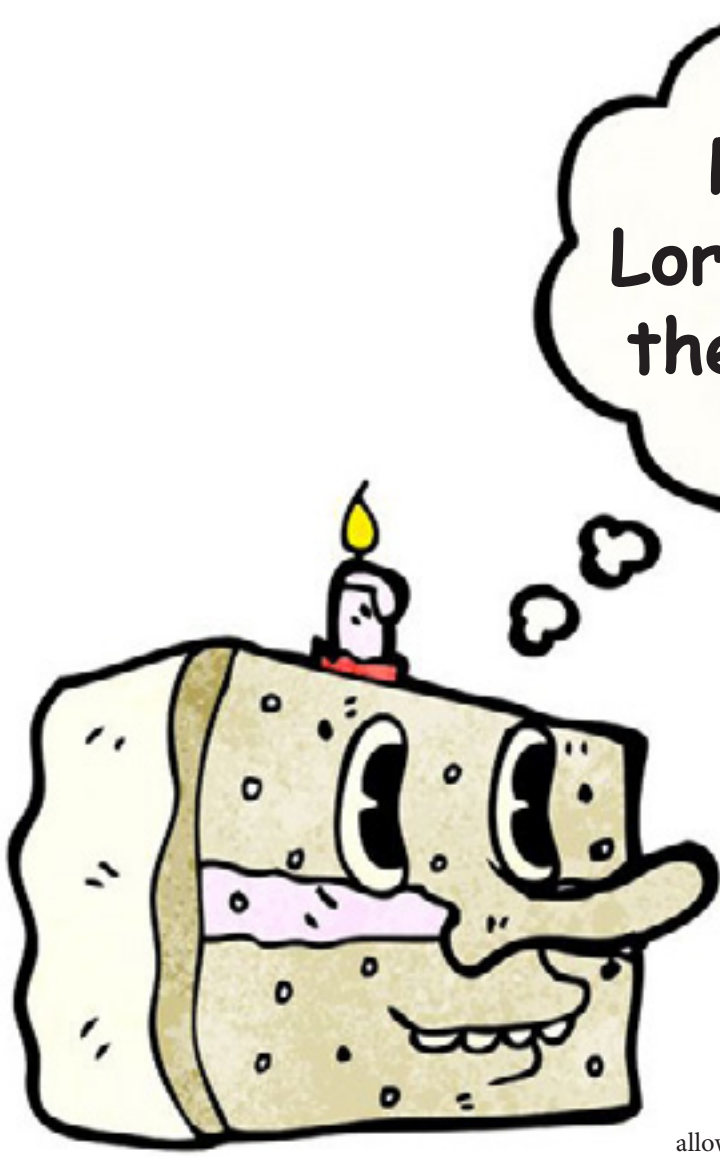

Hate Cake Leaves Baker With Bad Taste

Pro-LGBT Colorado baker slapped with religious discrimination complaint

By Berlin Sylvestre

It was an hour into her shift when Lindsay Jones, a pastry chef at Denver's Azucar Bakery, turned her attention from the full lobby to the "older, professional-looking" gentleman who'd just walked in. There was nothing strange in his demeanor as he sidled up to the counter to place an order.

In fact, he was friendly and his request for a Bible-shaped cake seemed simple enough. Azucar's owner, Marjorie Silva, tells *Out Front* that her employees are no strangers to Christian-themed requests and regularly fill them.

"We make [Christian-themed] cakes all the time," she says. "[The request] was no problem at all."

The gentleman took a seat at one of the tables as the team served him free samples and began building his order. He swiped through pics of Bible cakes on the iPad they presented him, and it appeared he'd found the perfect fit. It was only when he produced a leaf of paper from his pocket — careful not to release it to any of the attending employees, but simply brandishing it for them to read before returning it to his pocket — that the order "got a little uncomfortable," says Lindsay.

"He wanted us to write God hates …" she trails. "Just really radical stuff against gays."

"He wouldn't allow me to make a copy of the message, but it was really hateful," Marjorie adds. "I remember the words detestable, disgrace, homosexuality, and sinners."

However uncomfortable the request made the pair, both maintain that he was never refused service.

"I told him that I would bake the cake in the shape of a Bible," says Marjorie. "Then I told him I'd sell him a [decorating] bag with the right tip and the right icing so he could write those things himself." She adds that naturally the cake wouldn't have her handwriting expertise, but she would be devastated to release a cake via the bakery with such a hateful message fashioned by her own hands.

Table-side negotiations quickly broke down. "He told me I needed to talk to my attorney about this," Marjorie says. Then, he left.

A few hours later, however, he was back, asking Marjorie if she'd conferred with her lawyer over the matter. She hadn't.

"I was busy," she says. "I have a business to run here."

The sweet-toothed patrons in the bakery's dining room began to take notice of the confrontational man in the lobby and again, Marjorie offered to bake him the cake and sell him the appropriate tools to complete the task himself. Though she thankfully admits their banter never devolved into yelling, she says it's clear the man was comfortable creating a scene. He left upon request once more, still visibly upset, and Marjorie hoped that was the end of it. She says that one of her guests misheard the confrontation and thought Marjorie was refusing to bake a gay wedding cake. Exhausted, she reassured the patron that he was mistaken and that she would never do such a thing.

"We've done lots of gay weddings," Marjorie, who is half-Jewish, half-Catholic, tells us. "I love all people!"

The third time the gentleman entered the store that day, Marjorie called for backup, asking her brother to excuse him.

"I think he was looking for trouble at that point," Lindsay interjects, adding that it appeared he was trying to rile up the staff. "He was being really pushy and disruptive about his order." Azucar's customers watched the embarrassing ordeal, and again the man agreed to go.

"He said, 'You will hear from me!' and I got scared," Marjorie says. "I was worried he was going to follow me — you can tell who I am in our big, pink van."

And Marjorie did hear from the man again, but — much to her relief — it was through a letter filed with Colorado's Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA). The letter explained that a discrimination complaint had been filed against the bakery and that she would need to respond with her account of what happened the afternoon of March 13, 2014.

Part of her reply to DORA reads:

I can … tell you that the customer wanted us to draw two males holding hands … with a big 'X' on them. I told him that we do not like to discriminate in this bakery, we accept all humans and that the message and drawing is extremely rude.

Lindsay provided a reply to DORA as well that confirms:

[The guest] wanted an open book with the words "god hates homosexuality" and a 'no' sign over two men. He also wanted a scripture and the Ghostbusters logo.

Marjorie admits to being legitimately confused as to why he chose her bakery to make the anti-gay cake, but says it could have stemmed from a pro-equality statement she gave to a Spanish-speaking outlet in the wake of the Masterpiece Cakeshop decision. In the case, the Colorado Civil Rights Commission upheld an administrative law judge's ruling that a Lakewood bakery was guilty of discrimination when the owners refused to bake cakes for gay weddings. Ire came from far and wide and being so close to the final verdict, Marjorie suspects the man might have been organizing the backlash and using her shop to stage his protest.

"Then again, he could have just seen the pink shop and all the ladies working and thought he could bully us easily," she says. A portion of her DORA statement makes mention of the man seeming to have a problem with her Hispanic accent, which makes her wonder if that could have been the reason he felt so compelled to give her trouble.

A final portion of Marjorie's reply states:

I would like to make it clear that we never refused service. We only refused to write and draw what we felt was discriminatory against gays. In the same manner we would not … make a discriminatory cake against Christians, we will not make one that discriminates against gays.

"I'm not sure if I made the right decision [legally]," Marjorie says through an understandable hint of nerves. "But it felt right to me as a person."

DORA has requested a final letter from Marjorie. She says they'll make a decision 30 days from receipt. She said repeatedly that DORA reps have been incredibly helpful and kind throughout the process. *Out Front* will provide updates online as the case progresses.

Gay Advocate Raises Money to Help Christian Bakers Pay $150K Fine

By Leonard Blair , CP Reporter

Melissa and Aaron Klein. *Photo via Youtube from Facebook.*

Matt Stolhandske, a board member of Evangelicals for Marriage Equality who describes himself as a gay evangelical Christian, is now seeking to raise funds to help Oregon-based Christian bakers Aaron and Melissa Klein pay off approximately $150,000 in fines levied against them by the state because they refused to bake a cake for a lesbian wedding.

The Kleins' case became a national conversation last September after they were forced to shutter their business, Sweet Cakes by Melissa, after gay activists killed it with "mafia tactics."

In January, investigators from Oregon's Bureau of Labor and Industries found the Christian bakery owners guilty of violating the civil rights of lesbian couple Rachel Cryer and Laurel Bowman of Portland for refusing to bake their wedding cake. Investigators said they found significant evidence that the Kleins discriminated against the couple unlawfully because of their sexual orientation.

The couple revealed at the Values Voter Summit in Washington, D.C. last month that they are now facing a daunting $150,000 in fines as a result of the BOLI ruling.

In a Washington Post op-ed last Friday, Stolhandske said: "As a gay man, I should hate Melissa and Aaron Klein. … But I don't hate the Kleins. In fact, I'm raising money to cover the $150,000 punitive fine they received from Oregon."

He pointed to his campaign on rally.org which has raised a paltry $3,000 of the 150,000 he is hoping to raise for the bakers.

"The Kleins say the $150,000 fee will bankrupt her family. I'm raising money to help offset that cost. I'll send whatever we raise along to the Klein family with a message of love and peace. I don't want them to suffer," wrote Stolhandske.

"But I am also pleading with them and other Christians to stop using the name of Jesus to explain to the LGBT community why we don't deserve access to the civil rights afforded to heterosexuals through the legal institution of marriage," he continued.

"I hope the Kleins will accept this sign of good will. After all, they must see that our goals here are the same — to live our lives as we see fit and be treated equally under the law," he added.

Rev. Lori Rivera and Darlene Hatch Marry

After 30 years together, MCC of the Spirit's Pastor, Rev. Lori Rivera, and Darlene Hatch were married January 25 inside the MCC sanctuary. Celebrating with them were members of the MCC parish and others invited to share in the ceremony.

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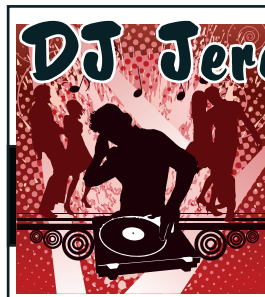

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Pat Robertson

By D'Anne Witkowski

This is a man who, at this point in his life, seems like a caricature of a crazy right-wing grandpa losing his mind.

Sound the alarms, everybody! Crazy old televangelist Pat Robertson has gone and exposed the deep dark secret of lesbian and gay people and there's no putting that genie back in the bottle now.

On the Dec. 17 episode of the 700 Club, a show that old people watch when they need to take a break from the whippersnappers at Fox News, Robertson dropped the following bombshell:

"You know, those who are homosexual will die out because they don't reproduce. You know, you have to have heterosexual sex to reproduce," he explained to his co-host Wendy Griffith.

And as Griffith nodded yes in agreement I shook my head no in shock and dismay.

No! This cannot be! What do you mean homos are going to die out? Why didn't anyone tell us about this? And to think of all of those poor, dumb homos over the years trying in vain to reproduce. All of that sex for nothing! What a waste.

I almost started to weep, but then I remembered, "Hey, wait a minute. My parents are heterosexual. And, oh my god, they might have even had heterosexual sex in order to conceive me – and my twin sister, who is also gay. Which means my parents are terrible at this! No wonder they had three additional children. To atone! It all makes so much sense now."

Come to think of it, the majority of the gay and lesbian people I know have heterosexual parents. But if, by following Robertson's logic, heterosexual sex produces heterosexual people, what the hell is happening? It can only mean one thing: homo body snatchers are invading the wombs of God-fearing heterosexual missionary-position-sex-having women and implanting them with homo demon seed ensuring that straight people will give birth to and raise as their own gay and lesbian spawn. In other words, homos are basically cuckolding straight people.

Either that or Robertson is wrong. But that can't be. He knows things. He speaks the truth! Why, this is a man who declared on Nov. 26 that racism was over so "racial agitators" should just shut up about it already.

"Police are very careful in dealing with people. They're trained to be careful with minorities and the abuses of the past are pretty much a thing of the past," Robertson said. And he should know since he's a white man born in 1930.

This is the man who told us we could get AIDS from towels. This is the man who told us that feminism was "a socialist, anti-family political movement that encourages women to leave their husbands, kill their children, practice witchcraft, destroy capitalism and become lesbians." This is a man who believes in a worldwide Jewish conspiracy. This is the man who dared to speak out about the razor sharp AIDS rings that homos wear to infect unsuspecting people they shake hands with. This is the man who wanted to know if macaroni and cheese was "a black thing." This is a man who is cool with first cousins marring so long as they don't have "mongoloid" children. This is the man who was personally told by the Lord that Mitt Romney would win the 2013 election.

Oh, wait. I guess he got some bad intel about that last one. But the rest of them are all Truth! At least in his mind!

This is a man who, at this point in his life, seems like a caricature of a crazy right-wing grandpa losing his mind. Except Robertson's reach is long and influence is deep and he has been reaping the rewards of hate speech for decades. But at least Robertson and his ilk will eventually die out.

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Keep PA Beautiful Recycles 900,000 lbs. of Electronics

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful's affiliate network provided Pennsylvania residents with disposal options for hard-to-dispose items that consisted of one-day events and permanent drop-off locations.

During 2014, nearly 30,000 tires, 917,407 pounds of electronics, over 500 appliances, and 48,455 pounds of household hazardous waste was properly disposed thanks to county-based Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful affiliates across the Commonwealth.

"Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful and our affiliate network work hard to provide affordable, convenient waste disposal and recycling options for all residents of Pennsylvania. Permanent convenient centers and special collections are a necessity when it comes to managing waste properly, otherwise items can be dumped illegally which then becomes a huge financial burden on the local government and community as a whole," said Shannon Reiter, President of Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful.

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful works to increase the availability of convenient, affordable disposal for sometimes hard to dispose of or recycle items such as tires, household hazardous waste, pharmaceuticals, and appliances.

KPB's affiliate network often partners with local solid waste and recycling offices to identify local disposal and recycling needs and implement special collections and other programs to fill the gap.

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful's mission is empowering Pennsylvanians to make our communities clean and beautiful. Visit the Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful Calendar of Events to find a special collection site near you - http://keeppabeautiful.org/CalendarOfEvents.aspx.

PA Green Groups: Ripe Time for Methane Pollution

Pennsylvania and national environmental organizations have encouraged Governor Tom Wolf to improve the protection of environmental and public health by tackling methane pollution early in his tenure as governor, according to Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future.

Recent polling indicates that 70% of Pennsylvanians not only have been dissatisfied with the lack of state leadership on natural gas issues, but also support regulating methane emissions in the state. (Poll conducted by Global Strategy Group of 801 registered voters in Pennsylvania between September 25-29, 2014.)

Gov. Wolf expressed a similar perspective last year when he addressed the issue of methane leaks: "We need to get clean air and clean water regulations that actually would prevent [methane leaks] from happening."

By adopting leading-edge practices to prevent methane emissions, Pennsylvania can make a common sense and cost-effective commitment to protecting public health and safety and the environment, according to Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future.

The groups have urged Wolf to build on public support and make comprehensive methane regulations one of the first acts of his administration. Early action on methane will signal a commitment to safeguarding air, water and land and protecting Pennsylvania families and the communities in which they live.

Participating organizations include the Clean Air Council, Clean Air Task Force, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Clean Water Action, Environmental Defense Fund, PennEnvironment, Pennsylvania Environmental Council, PennFuture, and The Nature Conservancy – Pennsylvania Chapter.

PennFuture is a statewide public interest membership organization.

DEP Citizens Advisory Council Invites Public Comments

The Citizens Advisory Council (CAC) to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection is accepting public comments and will accept public testimony during its March 17 meeting on the 2008-2013 Underground Coal Mining Impact Report required by the state's Bituminous Mine Subsidence and Land Conservation Act (Act 54).

The report includes information that documents and assesses the surface impacts resulting from both longwall and traditional room and pillar underground bituminous coal mining, including damage to surface structures and impacts to aquatic life, pH and conductivity of streams and the loss of domestic water supplies from mining in Armstrong, Beaver, Cambria, Clearfield, Elk, Greene, Indiana, Jefferson, Somerset and Washington counties.

The report, the fourth in a series required under Act 54, was prepared by the University of Pittsburgh and reviewed by DEP staff and released on December 30. DEP is required to submit the impact report to the CAC, the General Assembly, and the Governor every five years. Three previous Act 54 reports, also reviewed by the CAC, covered 1993 through 2008.

The university was selected by DEP to complete the report due to the expertise of its faculty and research staff on all aspects of the effects of mining-related subsidence. "Ensuring the public has the opportunity to provide input on the findings and conclusions included in the Act 54 report is critical to the Council," said Council Chairman Terry Dayton. "The CAC is very interested in hearing the public's perspectives on the report and encourages the public to share its comments with Council."

To pre-register to testify, contact Michele Tate, Executive Director of the CAC, by March 9 by calling 717-787-8171 or by sending an email to: mtate@pa.gov.

KEEP AMERICA BEAUTIFUL INC.

GREAT AMERICAN CLEANUP™ PENNSYLVANIA

Join the Great American Cleanup of PA until May 31

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful is now accepting registrations for the 2015 Great American Cleanup of PA.

Event coordinators can visit the Great American Cleanup of PA webpage, www.gacofpa.org. The Cleanup begins March 1 and runs until May 31. During this period, registered events can get free trash bags, gloves, and safety vests from PennDOT district offices, as supplies last.

Events can be litter cleanups, illegal dump cleanups, beautification projects, special collections, and educational events and must be registered through the Great American Cleanup of PA website, www.gacofpa.org, to receive free cleanup supplies.

As part of this event, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and Pennsylvania Waste Industries Association are sponsoring Let's Pick It Up PA – Everyday. During the Pick It Up PA Days, registered event coordinators will be able to take the trash collected during their cleanup to participating landfills for free disposal. The Let's Pick It Up PA – Everyday event begins April 11 and ends May 4. The focus day will be April 25.

All 67 counties in Pennsylvania were represented in the 2014 Great American Cleanup of PA. In total, there were 5,349 events with 136,507 volunteers. Volunteers collected 6,359,872 pounds of trash. They cleaned 13,603 miles of roads, railroad tracks, trails, waterways, and shorelines, and 9,113 acres of park and/or wetlands.

Additionally, volunteers planted 31,406 trees, bulbs, and plants in an effort to keep Pennsylvania beautiful. A copy of the 2014 Great American Cleanup of PA final report can be downloaded at http://gacofpa.org/PhotosandResults.aspx. Since inception in 2004, 1,565,967 volunteers removed 80,575,227 pounds of litter and planted 136,321 trees, bulbs, and flowers.

Register: www.gacofpa.org, call Michelle Dunn, Great American Cleanup of PA Program Coordinator, 1-877-772-3673 ext. 113 or mdunn@keeppabeautiful.org.

Gay Lawmaker Threatens to Reveal Colleagues' Affairs

By Mary Sell, Montgomery Bureau Times Daily

Alabama State Rep. Patricia Todd, D-Birmingham, had a warning for her statehouse colleagues over the weekend.

"I will not stand by and allow legislators to talk about 'family values' when they have affairs, and I know of many who are and have," Todd, the state's only openly gay lawmaker, said on Facebook over the weekend. "I will call our elected officials who want to hide in the closet out."

"I will not stand by and allow legislators to talk about 'family values' when they have affairs..."

Todd was responding to comments from her fellow lawmakers after a decision (Jan. 23) by a federal judge to overturn the state's ban on same-sex marriages.

"It is pretty well known that we have people in Montgomery who are or have had affairs …" Todd told the TimesDaily this morning. "I just want them to be careful what they're saying, some of it might come back to stick on them."

Todd said she hurt and angered by some of the remarks and backlash she has heard since Friday.

"But I know I'm on the side that is going to win and I'm sorry they're so ignorant," she said.

Several high-profile GOP leaders have spoken out against the ruling, and Attorney General Luther Strange asked the judge to stay her order until the U.S Supreme Court considers gay marriage later this year.

On Jan. 25, Judge Callie V.S. Granade put a two-week hold on the ruling, meaning couples will not be able to wed until Feb. 9.

Todd this morning said for Alabama to continue to fight gay marriage was a waste of limited state resources.

In 2006, Alabama voters passed a constitutional amendment declaring marriage between a man and woman. But Todd said sentiment has changed greatly in eight years.

Todd will carry this year a bill that would protect gay and lesbian state employees and teachers from workplace discrimination.

"I've probably burned any chance of getting it through," she said this morning.

PSEA Admits to Funding Illegal Election Mailer

Submitted by The Fairness Center

After publicly apologizing late last year for the content of an election mailer supporting Governor-Elect Wolf sent days before the election, the Pennsylvania State Education Association (PSEA) has now admitted funding the mailer using union members' dues—a clear violation of state law. The PSEA has also admitted to using its dues-funded magazine to illegally support candidates for office.

The PSEA responded to the charge filed with the Pennsylvania Labor Relations Board in November by complainant Mary Trometter and the Fairness Center by confirming that they used union members' dues money to fund the election mailer that Trometter found offensive and demeaning. The PSEA also offered various legal arguments to justify its conduct and relied extensively on the U.S. Supreme Court's controversial opinion in Citizens United v. FEC. Read PSEA's response here.

The Fairness Center is a nonprofit, public interest law firm offering free legal services to those facing unjust treatment from public employee union leaders. Info: www.FairnessCenter.org.

NATURE PLAY

Nurturing Children and Strengthening Conservation Through Connections to the Land

Land Trust Publishes Guide on Child-Nature Connections

The Pennsylvania Land Trust Association has recently released *Nature Play: Nurturing Children and Strengthening Conservation through Connections to the Land.*

Most adults today remember spending a great deal of time outdoors as a child. Up until just a few decades ago, children went outdoors every day, regardless of weather, exploring the natural world without adult interference. Imagination and appropriate attire was all that was required and the children defined the rules of nature play.

Today, nature play is essentially gone. Does its loss really matter?

Today, nature play is essentially gone. Does its loss really matter? In a word: yes. It's likely impossible to replace the cognitive growth benefits of frequent, spontaneous, nature-based childhood play. Nature play is also likely important for the achievement of conservation: It is human nature to want to protect what we love; nature play fosters emotional connection to the outdoors, which can result in a life-long appreciation of nature.

This publication explores the benefits of nature play and, with a sense of urgency, details the ways in which individuals and organizations can help to restore nature play to childhood.

"For generations, children have played outdoors and found wonder and enjoyment in their natural world. Today, there's an epidemic of what author Richard Louv calls nature deficit disorder," explained Andy Loza, PALTA executive director. "This guide is intended to empower and engage individuals, nonprofits, schools, local governments and others interested in re-establishing the essential bond between children and nature."

The publication is available for download at ConservationTools.org or hard copies may be requested by calling 717.909.1298.

Rep. Sims Sets Priorities for Second Term

State Rep. Brian Sims, D-Phila., has announced his priorities for a second term in the Pennsylvania House.

Sims said, "In addition to seeking to restore vital school funding, addressing the $2 billion deficit Governor Corbett is leaving and reversing the drastic decline in Pennsylvania's job-creation record, I will continue working with allies from both parties to reintroduce legislation on other important issues."

Other issues outlined by Sims include:

• LGBT equality, including equal protections in the workplace and a ban on harmful "conversion therapy" for minors

• sustainable development and manufacturing

• merit selection of judges

• fair compensation for people harmed by a local government's action or inaction, like Philadelphians who only got 19 cents on the dollar for electrical and water damage done to their homes by a 4-foot-wide water main break in 2012

• proactive women's health initiatives

Openly-gay Sims represents the 182nd Legislative District, which includes Rittenhouse, Fitler and Logan Squares, the Gayborhood and parts of Washington Square West, Bella Vista, Hawthorne, Graduate Hospital and Queen Village.

LGBT Movement Finds Another Year of Increased Revenues, Donors

ANNUAL ANALYSIS

Fueled by sharp increases in public support for equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people, as well as major marriage victories, the LGBT movement is seeing another year of rising revenues and expenses. According to a new report by the Movement Advancement Project (MAP), leading LGBT organizations are projecting combined 2014 expense budgets totaling $185.9 million, a 14% increase from 2013 expenses.

The 2014 National LGBT Movement Report also found that LGBT social justice organizations' revenues grew 7% from 2012 to 2013, with revenue exceeding expenses by $5.8 million in 2013 This financial growth continues an upward trend that re-emerged in 2011, following a downturn experienced by the LGBT movement during the Great Recession. Increases in expenses and revenue closely tracked national averages for nonprofits: nationally, total nonprofit revenue increased 7.8% and expenses increased 4.5%.

The report provides a comprehensive overview of the finances and financial health of a key segment of the LGBT movement: LGBT social justice organizations focusing on broad LGBT advocacy, issue-specific advocacy, legal advocacy, and research and public education. The 37 national and leading statewide organizations participating in this report collectively represent 61% of the budgets of LGBT social justice organizations. Among the findings of the report:

Findings:

* Movement groups are highly efficient in their fundraising and programming operations. On average, 81% of total expenses are dedicated to programs and services, exceeding the nonprofit efficiency benchmarks set by American Institute of Philanthropy (AIP) and Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Alliance (BBB).

* Fundraising and individual donations continue to increase, with a notable spike in individual giving, which increased 15% from 2012 to 2013, compared to a 4.2% nationwide increase in nonprofit giving.

* General financial health remains strong. In 2013, organizations reported an average of six months of working capital in 2013, a 9% increase from 2012.

* Fundamentally, Americans believe in fairness, and we are heartened to see more resources dedicated to making that value a reality," said Ineke Mushovic, executive director of MAP. "However, our work is far from finished. Same-sex couples can now marry in 34 states, but wearing a wedding ring to work can still result in gay or lesbian workers being legally fired in 29 states. We hope the continued growth in LGBT movement resources will help remedy these significant disparities."

The report also uncovered some other challenging trends:

* While more individual donors are giving to LGBT organizations, still less than 4% of LGBT adults have donated to one of the participating LGBT organizations.

* Participating organizations received, on average, 41% of their 2013 revenue from their 10 largest contributors. The average organization's reliance on top 10 contributors has fluctuated only 4 percentage points over the last five years—meaning the LGBT movement is highly reliant on a few key revenue sources.

* The racial and ethnic diversity of paid staff at participating organizations is slightly less than that of the overall population: 34% of paid staff identify as people of color compared to 37% of the U.S. population. Among senior staff, the percentage who are people of color dropped to 27%. Also, 47% of all staff are women and 12% identify as transgender.

New to the report this year, The 2014 National LGBT Movement Report includes a ten-year review, which analyzes the data available from the 22 organizations that have participated in the survey every year from 2004 to 2013. Some of the findings include:

* From 2004 to 2013, combined revenue for the 22 organizations increased 76%, from $75.8 million to $133.0 million.

* The ten-year time period is marked by an overall, though sporadic, increase in revenue coming from individual donations. However, the percentage of revenue coming from individual donations has actually declined over this period, from 57% of total revenue in 2004 to 40% in 2013.

* Since 2004, the 10-year participating organizations have reported an 800% increase in in-kind contributions, perhaps due to the rise in marriage equality litigation, aided by the generous pro bono donations of law firms across the country.

"Campaigns need fuel, and happily more and more people have stepped forward with financial support as we continue to make the case that all of America is ready for the freedom to marry," said Evan Wolfson, founder and president of Freedom to Marry. "But the work is far from done and this is no time to drop the ball—not just in winning marriage nationwide but in securing full inclusion and protections and enlarged possibilities for everyone, everywhere, throughout the country and beyond."

Founded in 2006, the Movement Advancement Project (MAP) is an independent think tank that provides rigorous research, insight and analysis that help speed equality for LGBT people.

Report: LGBT Community Center Leadership

The biennial LGBT Community Center Survey Report provides a detailed picture of centers' staffs and boards, program priorities, constituencies and services, infrastructure, fundraising, budgets, and technical assistance needs. The 2014 report finds that local community centers serving lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people provide vital information, education, and health services to almost 40,000 people each week.

The LGBT Community Center Survey Report, prepared jointly by MAP and CenterLink and published every two years, provides an overview of local lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community centers, including their capacity, their programs and services, the people they serve, and their technical assistance needs.

The 2014 report analyzes data from 111 LGBT community centers, which represent 84% of all LGBT community center expenses. Among the report's key findings:

LGBT community centers serve almost 40,000 people each week (or over 1.9 million people annually). This includes referring over 9,900 people weekly to other organizations or agencies for services and assistance.

Both large and small LGBT centers reported revenues increases from 2012 to 2013; small centers experienced a 20% increase in revenues from 2012 to 2013, compared to a 12% increase for large centers.

Despite the increase in average center revenue, many centers still struggle with a lack of funding and resources; 21% of all surveyed centers have no staff and rely solely on volunteers; and 57% have five or fewer paid staff. Almost half of center staff (49%) identify as people of color.

The demographics of LGBT community center patrons vary greatly among centers. On average however, center patrons are disproportionately male, people of color, transgender, and/or low-income.

Chamber on the move

By Bill Krenz

Central Pennsylvania Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce

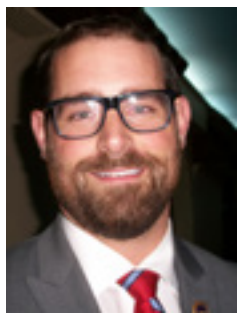
Chamber: Rep. Brian Sims and Alicia Richards Address 8th Annual Dinner

The Central Pennsylvania Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce's eighth Annual Meeting and Dinner was held January 28 at The Hotel Hershey with the theme "Creating Change, Leaving a Legacy". The 100 in attendance event also celebrated the chamber's unprecedented third consecutive national award from the National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce.

Alicia Richards, of ABC27, was the keynote speaker. She discussed her journalism and insights into the work she does to help build the region.

State Representative Brian Sims was the guest speaker, who roused the audience with his insight on the importance of LGBT nondiscrimination legislation.

Other noted guests included Governor Wolf's nominee for Physician General, Dr. Rachel Levine, State Representative Patty Kim, and Equality PA Executive Director Ted Martin.



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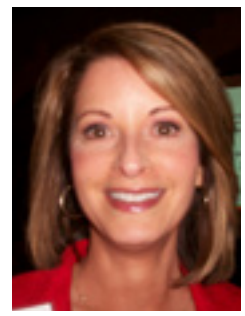

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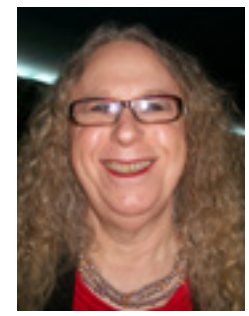

Levine

Leadership changes announced for 2015 include Harry Young, who will serve as president and CEO. Young works for Hershey Entertainment and Resorts as a food and beverage manager with the Entertainment group. Cory Messinger is vice president and events chair, and serves as an Aftercare and Advance Planning Coordinator for Hetrick, Bitner, Geigle and Smith Funeral Homes. Russ Boggs continues as treasurer and finance cair. Bill Krenz continues as secretary and PR and marketing chair. He works in the Department of Nursing administrative office at the Hershey Medical Center. Gil Brown is a new board member who will serve as membership chair. He is president and CEO, Hospice of Central Pennsylvania.

Deb McClain, outgoing president and CEO since 2012, was awarded a plaque in recognition of her guiding the chamber to unprecedented growth, increasing membership and Corporate Investment by fostering strong relationships with local businesses, partners, and the National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce and affiliate chambers.

Event sponsors and Corporate Sponsors included Members 1st, Highmark, and The Hershey Company.

Chamber Events:

The Foundation for Hope hosted our February mixer at their location in Harrisburg.

Our March mixer will be held on March 18 at the DoubleTree Resort by Hilton, 2400 Willow Street Pike, Lancaster.

April 8, The Paper Lion Gallery will host our mixer at their location on Hummel Avenue in Lemoyne.

Conservancy Hosts Challenge

Registration is now open for the 6th Annual Ironmaster's Challenge, a trail race where participants traverse Michaux State Forest and Pine Grove Furnace State Park in south-central Pennsylvania. Distances for the Challenge include a 50K Ultra distance and a 15K Challenge, both of which are open to runners and hikers. Hosted by the Central Pennsylvania Conservancy (CPC) in partnership with the Susquehanna Appalachian Trail Club (SATC), the event takes place April 26.

All proceeds from the Challenge benefit the Central Pennsylvania Conservancy (CPC), the local, nonprofit land trust for an 8-county south-central PA region, with a mission to conserve natural resources and open space for the benefit of current and future generations through land acquisitions, donated easements and outreach and education. The CPC renovated and operates the Ironmaster's Mansion, located at Pine Grove Furnace State Park in Cumberland County and serving as an overnight hostel for hikers on the Appalachian Trail, and a facility for special events and environmental education and history programming.

The 50K Ultra is on a trail course designed to test the serious hiker and trail runner. The 15K is a less demanding trail course suited for the more leisurely pace of fitness walkers, trail runners and moderate distance hikers. All trails are clearly marked and professional radio communications will be operating to ensure that participants are safe and well-informed. Trail maps are available on the event website.

To register: www.ironmasterschallenge.com

Inclusion Is Good for Economic Development

A study by the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Williams Institute at the UCLA School of Law suggests pro-LGBT laws can spur economic growth in developing countries.

The study examined 29 countries with "emerging" economies: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Russia, Turkey, Ukraine, Egypt, Morocco, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Venezuela, India, Pakistan and South Africa. It also looked at Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Serbia, Nepal, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Kenya that had been deemed "countries of interest."

The study used the Global Index on Legal Recognition of Homosexual Orientation, a Dutch research tool from the 1960s that ranks countries on whether they have decriminalized consensual same-sex sexual acts between adults and seven other factors in relation to rights for gays and lesbians. Researchers also relied upon a preliminary transgender rights index that ranks countries on anti-discrimination laws and 15 other measures.

The Global Index on Legal Recognition of Homosexual Orientation ranks countries on a scale from zero to eight. And researchers concluded that a country's gross domestic product was $320 — or three percent higher — for each point it gained on the index.

The study also indicates countries with anti-discrimination laws have a per capita GDP that is $1,763 higher than nations without them.

"LGBT inclusion and economic development go hand and hand," said M.V. Lee Badgett of the Williams Institute on Tuesday during a panel in Northwest D.C.

Researchers also examined five factors for the study: Police abuse, violence, health disparities, access to employment and discrimination and harassment in schools. Badgett said they all contribute to "lower economic output."

"This is not rocket science," she said. "This is pretty much common sense. People who are subjected to arrest and abuse or violence are less likely to be available to work. They may have health problems that result from this."

The LGBT Global Development Partnership, a $16 million public-private initiative that USAID launched in April 2013 with the Williams Institute and other groups to promote LGBT rights around the world over four years, undertook the study.

The Williams Institute on Tuesday unveiled a second study that indicates acceptance of homosexuality has increased significantly over the last decades.

"Making that economic case is absolutely crucial and making it in a robust and unimpeachable way is really essential," said USAID Chief Strategy Officer Carla Koppell during the panel as she discussed the report. "The research is critical."

Poverty drives discrimination

The World Bank reports Malawi, Burundi, Central African Republic, Niger and the Democratic Republic of Congo were the countries with the lowest per capita GDP in 2013. Consensual same-sex sexual relations remain illegal in Malawi and Burundi.

Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni last month acknowledged a draconian anti-gay law he signed earlier this year that imposed a life sentence upon anyone found guilty of repeated same-sex sexual acts could adversely affect his country's economy. The Ugandan Constitutional Court in August struck down the Anti-Homosexuality Act on a technicality, but recent media reports suggest parliamentarians are poised to introduce an even harsher measure.

The economies of the majority of English-speaking Caribbean countries in which homosexuality remains criminalized remain highly dependent upon tourism.

Travel industry representatives in September met with a group of LGBT rights activists from the Bahamas, the Dominican Republic, Dominica, St. Lucia, Grenada, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica and Belize in Miami to discuss ways they can support regional advocacy efforts.

Malaika Brooks-Smith-Lowe of Goundation Grenada, a Grenadian human rights organization, told the Washington Blade after the meeting that boycotting a country over its LGBT rights record would adversely affect those who work within its tourism industry.

"Their reaction could easily be one that further isolates LGBT folks, saying well now I'm losing my job or I'm missing out on my salary because of you and because the U.S. thinks that you're so important," she said. "I'm not sure that that is the most useful approach."

Jacqueline L'Hoist Tapia, chair of the Mexico City Council to Prevent and Eliminate Discrimination, told the Blade during an interview last month that poverty "drives" discrimination in the Mexican capital.

One of the many initiatives the council has launched is a public education campaign that highlights a proposal that would allow trans people in Mexico City to legally change their name without a court order.

"Transsexual and trans people as you know very well is an invisible group," L'Hoist told the Blade. "The idea behind the campaign is to recognize the trans population in Mexico City."

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